



# DEBUSSY REVEALED

*We thought we knew everything about Debussy's life and music, but 150 years after his birth, the collection of the Complete Works of Claude Debussy still surprises us as it continues to reveal unknown pieces.*



# DEBUSSY REVEALED

*In 2012 the music world celebrates the 150th birthday of the composer often known simply as “Claude of France”. The collection of the Complete Works of Claude Debussy has not finished surprising us by revealing previously undiscovered works.*

Claude Debussy on the beach at Houlgate with his daughter Chouchou (in the background), August 1911.



# THE EVOLUTION OF THE *COMPLETE* *WORKS*

## *First, a Catalogue*

Publishing this edition of the *Complete Works of Claude Debussy* has mobilised the energies of numerous musicologists and has given rise to a vast quantity of in-depth research. This systematic exploration, based on the painstaking examination of handwritten manuscripts and sketches, also relies on corrected proofs and first editions annotated by the composer himself, when existent.

One might think that the entire sum of Debussy's manuscripts has already been identified and carefully organised in public and private libraries. One imagines the first editions grouped together in a secure archive... And although this is the case for a large number of documents, there is still a non-negligible body of work that defies research.

Why is this? The fault lies partially with Debussy himself who catalogued his work only once in his lifetime, and that in 1894 when he was admitted to the *Société des Auteurs!* In addition, he had

difficulty recalling just when his pieces were conceived. In 1908, when the musicographer Jean Aubry attempted to catalogue his work, Debussy replied, "As to the dates of composition, I am unfortunately unable to remember." It is entirely understandable therefore that the chronology of his work remains somewhat problematic to this day. Jean Aubry published the first comprehensive catalogue of Debussy's work in May 1918, shortly after the composer's death.

Various publishers have made major contributions to the effort. Éditions Durand has been compiling a list of works since 1910 and published a catalogue of Claude Debussy's works (133 pages) in 1962 in celebration of the 100th anniversary of the musician's birth.

In 1977, François Lesure published a *Catalogue des Œuvres de Claude Debussy* in Geneva. This document has been an invaluable tool for research, and a veritable base of study for the compilation of the *Complete Works*. The synergy generated by this monumental edition gave rise to new documents, new

propositions in terms of dates, and collaboration with other composers. A revision had become imperative. Anik Devriès-Lesure undertook the task, adding the new catalogue to the critical biography written by François Lesure when it was published in 2003 (*Claude Debussy, biographie critique* followed by the catalogue of works Paris, 2003).

## *Scattered Manuscripts*

Numerous manuscripts have changed hands since 1918 and, as a result, new handwritten manuscripts, corrected proofs and editions annotated by the composer continue to emerge. Yet some manuscripts remain elusive. We know that some twenty autograph documents were destroyed in fires, while others were subjected to the negligence of the heirs to various collections. We know of the existence of certain manuscripts but their whereabouts remain a mystery. There is no describing the joy when a previously unknown autograph appears at an auction, for so many pages have been scattered

Même mouvt

*bref*

P. *cher...*  
*walk.*

E - cou - te; j'entends par -  
But lis - ten; I hear them

*do*

*f* *p*

3 3 3 3

P. *ler der-riè-re cet-te por-te.*  
*talk-ing there be-hind this door now.*

Vi-te, vi-te, ré-pends vi-te, où te ver-  
Quick then, quick, an-swer quick-ly, where shall I

*p* *f*

2 1 3 3

MÉLISANDE

Un peu retenu

Où veux-tu?  
*crant* Where you will.

-rai-je? Dans le parc, près de la fon-tai-nedes a-veu-gles?  
*2 3 4* see you? In the park there be-side the well of the blind-men?

*1 1/2 3 1 2 3*

*p*

3 3

Pelléas et Mélisande, vocal score dated 1907 with handwritten variants for tenor (Pelléas' role).

and lost. The responsibility falls squarely on the shoulders of Emma Debussy. She would often cut pages from a manuscript and send them to close friends as a souvenir of “her beloved Claude” and she dispersed the remaining body of his work at a public sale in 1933.

Luckily Jacques Durand conserved approximately fifty manuscripts that had been used for the original printing. These were then

(which would later become Éditions Fromont).

In 1903, Éditions Durand began regularly publishing Debussy’s work and on July 17, 1905 Debussy signed an exclusive contract with an old friend from his days at the *Conservatoire de Paris*, Jacques Durand. Since then, Durand has kept a precise record in their books, removing any doubt as to the first editions of Debussy’s work published in his lifetime.

## IT WAS ALSO IMPERATIVE TO LIST ALL SOURCES FOR THOSE DOCUMENTS THAT HAD BEEN GIVEN UP AS LOST...

donated to the library of the *Conservatoire* which preserved the documents in what today has become the Music Department of the *Bibliothèque nationale de France*.

### *Missing Editions*

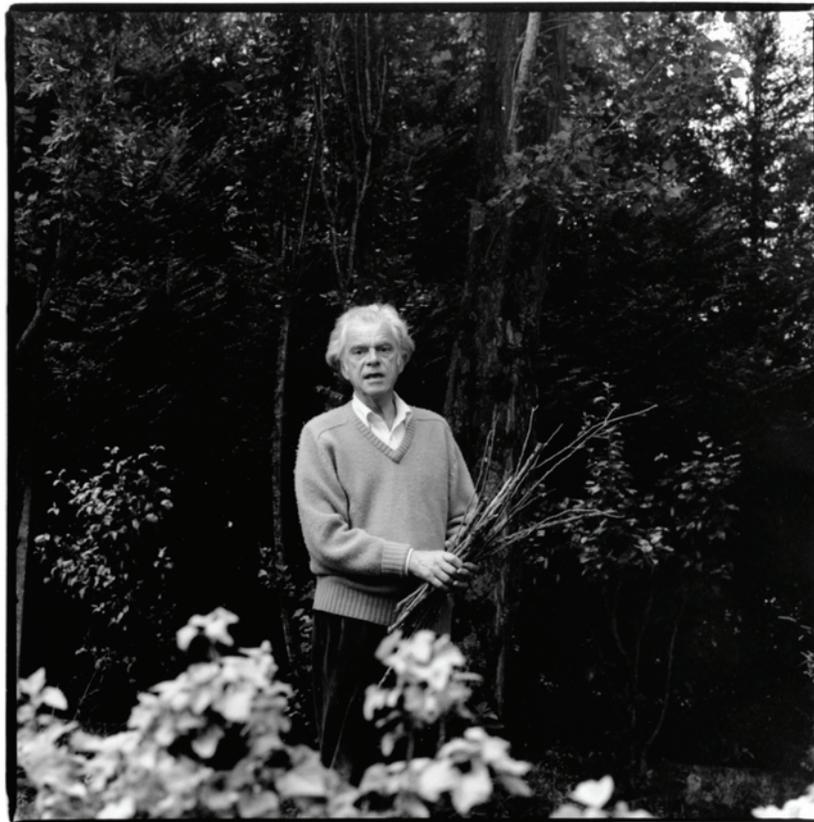
Research efforts have been complicated by the fact that Debussy, early in his career, worked with several publishers in quick succession (Paul Dupont, Hamelle, Veuve Girod, Durand, Choudens). In addition, some of his work was published in periodicals or in magazine supplements. It is therefore not surprising to discover that the *Bibliothèque nationale* has not been able to conserve all of the first editions. Matters became clearer in 1894, when Debussy was published by Georges Hartmann

### *The Beginning*

The *Centre Debussy* was originally welcomed in the ‘60s by Charles Guy and located on his premises in the *Pavillon de Noailles* in Saint Germain en Laye. But the centre did not become truly functional until François Lesure hired Margaret Cobb as curator. The Centre’s mission was to collect the greatest amount of documents possible: from photocopies of autograph manuscripts, to books about Debussy, to phonographic and iconographic documents. It was the first major institute to unite researchers and create synergy around the work of “Claude of France”. Its influence on publishing was profound. Several researchers were inspired to put into print the previously unpublished works that they found in the Centre’s archives. This was particularly the case for Roy Howat who was interested in editing two unknown works: *Images* for piano (1894) and the first version of the *Étude* “For composed arpeggios”. But where to publish? Roy Howat eventually published the *Images* of 1894 (under the title “*Images Oubliées*”) in 1977

and sketch of the *Étude* (as “*Étude Retrouvée*”) in 1980 in the United States. Simultaneously, Éditions Durand made the decision to publish an almost entirely unknown piece entitled *Morceau de Concours* that had originally appeared in 1905 in the magazine *Musica*. A real problem was becoming apparent: in the absence of a central editor, the release of unpublished or posthumous material risked becoming dispersed, unmanageable and subject to different, and often contradictory, editorial practices. Roy Howat recalls that in 1980, he shared some of his research with Pierre Boulez who was convinced that the time had come to publish corrected versions of Debussy’s work; versions that would take into account the different musical sources that had been unacknowledged until then. This was also a major preoccupation for François Lesure, who first had the idea of putting together an all-encompassing critical edition of the work.

Early in 1982, François Lesure began making inquiries, consulting with musicians and musicologists about the possible ways to go about publishing Debussy’s work. Several things were of paramount importance: the creation of an Editorial Committee, the establishment of a single editorial process that could be applied to the entire body of work, the development of a framework to govern engraving, printing and binding. Finally, but most importantly, it was necessary to find a publisher capable of handling a critical edition of Claude Debussy’s entire body of work, knowing that the undertaking would be costly and that it would be many years,



François Lesure

if not decades, in the completion. François Lesure hoped to put together an international committee. He called on Roy Howat (U.K.) and Marie Rolf (U.S.A.), as well as Pierre Boulez and Claude Helffer. A short time later Myriam Chimènes and Marius Flothius (Netherlands) completed the team. On the practical side, the fabrication would be the result of a co-edition between Éditions Costallat, a department of the Gaumont-Erato Group, and Éditions Durand, the long time

publisher of Debussy’s work. Costallat took charge of production and Durand managed distribution. Jérôme Paillard at Costallat became the General Editor for this immense undertaking.

The first order of business consisted of sorting the volumes of music into different series and establishing content for each publication. The thirty original volumes quickly grew to thirty-three, to thirty-four... and today there are thirty-six in all! It was necessary to find scientific

editors and proofreaders. If this were not enough, it was also imperative to list all sources so that provenance was clear for those documents that had been given up as lost, or whose traces had evaporated over the course of numerous private and public sales. Thus, several volumes could eventually be attributed: *The Préludes* (C. Helffer and R. Howat), *Jeux* (P. Boulez and M. Chimènes), *Œuvres pour deux pianos* (N. Lee) and *La Mer* (M. Rolf).

In July of 1986, the Editorial Committee met in Provence where they were welcomed by the *Fondation des Treilles* on the occasion of the *Journées d'études de la Société française de Musicologie* in Villecroze. Various publishing organisations were discussing a critical

in 1991. Unfortunately at this time matters became more complicated. Jérôme Paillard was called to other duties within the Gaumont-Erato and Denis Herlin took over editorial responsibility as assistant Editor-in-chief. 1991 was the last year that François Lesure organised the meeting of the Committee. It was also a year filled with questions. After having published five volumes, Gaumont-Erato underwent a profound restructuring at the end of which it was decided that there was no room for an edition of the *Complete Works of Claude Debussy!* Needless to say, the period that followed was difficult and the Edition, now with no editor, seemed to lose its momentum. This did not keep François Lesure and Denis Herlin from continuing their research and correcting the musical sources.

### *The Revival*

The project was revived in the autumn of 1996 when Éditions Durand, at that time in the hands of Jean-Manuel de Scarano and directed by Thierry Mobillon, decided to continue the work on their own. François Lesure once again called upon Edmond Lemaître who from that time forward took up editorial responsibility for the collection. Publication began again in 1997 with *La Mer*, followed by volume 2 in the series for piano. Technology was evolving and computer assisted printing was taking over from halftone engraving reproduction, a technical advance which did not occur without a few unpleasant surprises. After the death of Thierry Mobillon in 1997,

## THE PROJECT WAS REVIVED IN THE AUTUMN OF 1996 WHEN ÉDITIONS DURAND DECIDED TO CONTINUE THE WORK ON THEIR OWN

edition of Berlioz or Rameau. As for Debussy, everyone was delighted to examine the first two volumes, the *Préludes*, and the pieces for piano. It was at that time that François Lesure introduced the committee to Edmond Lemaître, who soon thereafter joined the team of musicologists. More publications were released in the following years: *Jeux* was published in 1988, and *Études*, as well as Volume 3 of the *Série I*,

his successor, Bernard Brossollet, made several decisions aimed at unifying and simplifying production: production was stopped on the so-called “Gold” edition, characterised by the stamps on the cover and spine of the binding, as well as the text on the jacket, and destined for subscribers; bindings and dust jackets were standardised and the front matter was homogenised. This explains the difference in appear-

publication of offprints. Performers now had access to the texts of reference in the collection without the critical notes, and this contributed a great deal to the *Complete Works*’ visibility. The success of these offprints was immediate and today there are more than forty of these smaller volumes that, for the last few years, have gradually been replacing the original editions as they go out of print.

Salabert Eschig, is presiding over the future outcome of the *Complete Works*. We are almost half way there. Two volumes that are the result of an immense effort, *Le Martyre de saint Sébastien* and the vocal score to *Pelléas et Mélisande* are in the hands of musicians. It is clear that there is still a long way to go and that it will be impossible to finish the *Complete Works of Claude Debussy* in time for the



ance between the early volumes and those published after 1999. At this time the project first received the financial support of Musica Gallica (that support continues to this day). Musica Gallica was born from the collaboration between the Ministry of Culture and the Fondation Francis et Mica Salabert and its mission is to promote French musical heritage. Another important innovation at this time was the

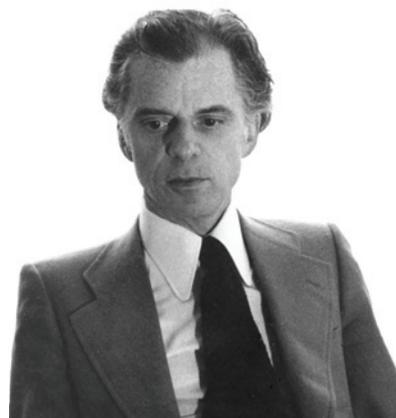
François Lesure passed away ten years ago, but he is still with us in spirit, guiding the collection. Denis Herlin succeeded him as Editor-in-chief and continues to manage the collection with the same high standards in terms of musicology. Today the seventeenth volume is being released under the aegis of Universal Music Publishing Classical. Nelly Quérol, the General Manager of Éditions Durand

100th anniversary of his death. However, the entire editorial team under the leadership of Denis Herlin is working toward the realisation of this monumental project, an edition that will serve the composer, his work, and the musicians who interpret his music; an edition whose publications will be a reference and whose volumes, by their high degree of excellence, will grace the shelves of many a library.



Denis Herlin,  
Myriam Chimènes,  
Pierre Boulez,  
Edmond Lemaître.

# COMPLETE WORKS OF CLAUDE DEBUSSY: THE TEAM



## *François Lesure, the founder (1923–2001)*

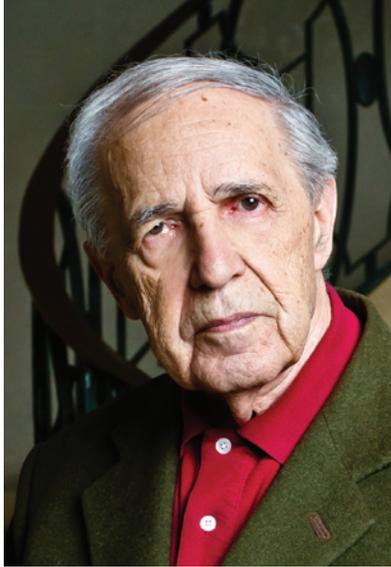
A graduate of the *École pratique des Hautes-Études* as well as the *École des Chartes*, he also simultaneously studied music history at the *Conservatoire national supérieur de Paris*. In 1950, he joined the Music Department of the *Bibliothèque nationale* as librarian. He would become chief curator there from 1970 to 1988. Head of the Paris bureau and of the general Secretariat for the *Répertoire international des sources musicales (R.I.S.M.)* for which he undertook the publishing of several volumes. He distinguished himself by organising a series of exhibits for the *Bibliothèque nationale*, in particular on Mozart (1956),

Debussy (1962) and Berlioz (1969). In 1967 he founded the first French collection devoted to early music (*Le Pupitre* at Heugel) and then, the *Patrimoine* collection at Costallat. He was President of the *Société française de Musicologie* from 1971 to 1974 and again from 1988 to 1991, and professor at the *Université libre de Bruxelles*, professor and Study director at the *École pratique des Hautes-Études*. He has also been distinguished as *Commandeur des Arts et des Lettres* in 1993.

A great enthusiast of Debussy's work, he devoted the major part of his life's work and energy to the composer. He was a prolific author, writing numerous articles for musicology magazines, as well as several books, *Claude Debussy avant Pelléas* or *les Années symbolistes* (Klincksieck, 1992), and *Claude Debussy :*

*Biographie critique*, (Klincksieck 1994). He endeavoured to give fundamental tools to musicologists by establishing the *Catalogue de l'œuvre de Claude Debussy* (Minkoff, 1977) and by undertaking the monumental task of editing and publishing *Correspondance (1872-1918)*, which was finalised by Denis Herlin (Galimard 2005).

François Lesure founded the *Centre de Documentation Claude Debussy* in 1972 and the *Cahiers Debussy*; it was the beginning of an odyssey that would eventually lead the Foundation to the vast enterprise of publishing, with the nine first volumes he directed, *The Complete Works of Claude Debussy...*



## THE EDITORIAL COMMITTEE

### *Denis Herlin, Editor-in-chief*

**D**enis Herlin is head of research for the CNRS at the IRPMF. With a Doctorate in Musicology (*École pratique des Hautes-Études, IV<sup>e</sup> section*), he is the author of a series of articles on French Baroque music and on the works of Claude Debussy, as well as several critical editions (*Nocturnes* by Debussy [1999] in particular). Editor-in-chief of the *Complete Works of Claude Debussy* since 2002, he collaborated with François Lesure on compiling the edition of Debussy's correspondence (2005). He is currently preparing the publication of a volume of melodies (Série II, volume 4).

### *Pierre Boulez*

**C**omposer and orchestral conductor, Pierre Boulez has directed and recorded a vast number of works by Debussy. He was at the origin of François Lesure's reflections that brought the latter to create the *Complete Works of Claude Debussy*. He has published *Jeux* in collaboration with Myriam Chimènes and has worked together with the Japanese musicologist Eiko Kasaba on *Le Martyre de saint Sébastien* in 2009. He is also the president of the *Centre de Documentation Claude Debussy*.

### *Myriam Chimènes*

**D**irector of research for the CNRS at the IRPMF, and Secretary-General at the Centre de Documentation Claude Debussy since 1986, she is also in charge of editing the *Cahiers Debussy*. A member of the editorial committee for the *Complete Works* since 1985, she has published the orchestral score for *Jeux* in collaboration with Pierre Boulez. Author of various articles on Debussy, she is in charge of scientific coordination for the International Claude Debussy Colloquium (Paris 2012). She is currently working on an edition of *Khamma*, the subject of her doctoral thesis that she prepared under the guidance of François Lesure and which she defended in 1980 at the Paris IV University.



### **Roy Howat**

Roy Howat's interest as both pianist and scholar in French repertoire led to his influential book *Debussy in proportion* and his involvement as one of the founding participants in the *Complete Works of Claude Debussy*. He has also edited critical editions of music by Handel, Chabrier and Fauré. He tours internationally as concert pianist and lecturer, has held university posts in various continents and has recorded numerous discs of piano and chamber music including all Debussy's known solo piano music. Following an AHRB Research Fellowship at London's Royal College of Music, where, in 2003, he became Keyboard Research Fellow.

### **Marie Rolf**

Marie Rolf is Professor of Music Theory and the Associate Dean of Graduate Studies at the Eastman School of Music of the University of Rochester in Rochester, New York. Her publications cover a variety of topics, from manuscript studies of Debussy and Mozart to the relationship between analysis and performance in songs by Richard Strauss. In 2004, she brought to light a completely unknown song by Debussy, "Les Papillons", publishing a facsimile, transcription, and essay on the work. Rolf is a founding member of the editorial board for the *Complete Works of Claude Debussy*, published by Durand; her critical edition of *La Mer* appeared in 1997. She is currently preparing a volume of Debussy's songs (Série II, volume 2).

### **Edmond Lemaître, General Editor**

With a *Premier prix* in Musicology and Music History from the *Conservatoire national supérieur de Paris*, Edmond Lemaître has published several critical editions on Baroque music (Éditions du CNRS). He has been the General Editor for the *Complete Works of Claude Debussy* since 1996. Treasurer of the Centre de Documentation Claude Debussy, member of the editorial committee for the *Cahiers Debussy*, he has published a volume of pieces for piano four-hands in collaboration with Noël Lee (Série I, volume 9).



Claude Debussy and his two dogs, around 1910, Avenue du Bois de Boulogne, in front of his studio.



### *Claude Helffer and Marius Flothuis*

**W**e must also mention the names of two former collaborators who contributed to the critical edition, both members of the Editorial Committee.

Composer and musicologist, Marius Flothuis directed the Concertgebouw of Amsterdam and participated in the *Neue Mozart Ausgabe*. He passed away in 2002 without having finished his work on the volume of early melodies that he was preparing. Publication of the volume has been postponed after the discovery of new musical sources and the ensuing adjustment of the chronological order of the melodies.

Claude Helffer, who always defended the cause of French avant-garde music, was deeply involved in the *Complete Works*. In 1985 he edited the *Préludes* in collaboration with Roy Howat, the first volume in the collection. He went on to publish the *Études* in 1991. At the time of his death in 2004, he had just begun preliminary work on the sources for three sonatas by Debussy, a mission that has since passed to his reader, Neil Heyde.

# DEBUSSY'S UNORTHODOX NOTATIONS



63

"Poissons d'or"  
(Images, 2<sup>e</sup> série)

63

82

84



*Le Diable dans le beffroi, fragments.*

## Roy Howat

As I was preparing the *Preludes*, I became increasingly persuaded that Debussy's sometimes unorthodox way of directing stems in his piano manuscripts had important things to show: it often indicated large-scale voicing and architecture in ways that normal engraving conventions (as in the original editions) obscured. (The standard rule is that notes below the middle of a staff should point their stems up, and *vice versa*, unless another voice shares the staff). My idea of following Debussy's unorthodox usage in print, where practicable, was supported by Claude Helffer but scrutinized by the committee with understandable initial scepticism before being approved. Our engraver

(or typesetter) was less happy, and matters reached a head after a third proof of "Poissons d'or" asked him again to point some stems up instead of down. An elegantly phrased letter arrived by return, explaining that this could be done only if *les musicologues* would clearly explain in their preface that such "absurd" breakages of "musical laws" were not due to incompetence by the engraver. Following one of those quizzical glances from François Lesure, I devised a diplomatically-worded reply, and our final proof arrived with the stems in question pointing up (bars 72–3 and 76–7 of "Poissons d'or", top staff), surmounted by engraver's written commentary triply underlined in lurid green ink: "Debussy, in his paradise, must be relieved!!!!".

The present edition of *The Complete Works of Claude Debussy* is being published in 36 volumes, under the auspices of the French Ministry of Culture, the *Centre national de la Recherche scientifique* and the *Bibliothèque nationale de France*. The volumes are divided into the following categories:

1. Piano works
2. Songs
3. Chamber music
4. Choral works
5. Orchestral works
6. Theatrical works

In each volume, the music is preceded by a foreword retracing the music's genesis, and is followed by critical notes describing sources and editorial method. Before the Appendix comes the List of Variants, in which particularly significant variants are emphasized by bar references printed in bold type.

All known sources (sketches, manuscripts, proofs, editions, post-publication revisions, correspondence, historical recordings) are examined in detail. The musical text proposes the composer's final intended version, as far as this can be ascertained. In cases where a work exists in two significantly different finished versions, both are published. When such variants concern only isolated passages, the earlier versions are given in an appendix. Works hitherto unpublished and unfinished works are published as far as the state of the sources permits.

Editorial accidentals and rests are normally distinguished by smaller type. Editorially added brackets, ties and slurs, and hairpin dynamics are printed .

Other editorial additions are placed in square brackets. Editorial procedure is explained in detail in the critical notes.

A close-up photograph of a silver, foil-stamped signature on a dark blue, textured fabric background. The signature is written in a fluid, cursive script and reads "Claude Debussy". The lighting highlights the metallic sheen of the stamp against the fine weave of the fabric.

Debussy's silver, foil-stamped signature on the cover of each volume of the *Complete Works of Claude Debussy*.

# A SUPREME HOMAGE

*The progression of the  
debussyste research*

*Myriam Chimènes*

Debussy enjoyed considerable fame during his lifetime. His success began in 1902 with *Pelléas*, and quickly spread beyond the borders of France beginning with the United States and Great Britain. No small achievement for a composer in the early 1900's! Debussy died on March 25, 1918 just as Big Bertha was bombarding Paris. The Minister of State Education and *Beaux-Arts* attended his funeral, a tribute to the patriotic "Claude of France" whose work played such an integral role in the history of French music. In 1932, monuments were erected in his honour in Saint-Germain-en-Laye and in Paris, a continuation of the homage paid to the composer. In 1945, Olivier Messiaen devoted a class to *Pelléas*, the piece that is most representative of Debussy. Among the students were Jean Barraqué and Pierre Boulez. Pierre Boulez had written that modern music began with *L'Après-midi d'un Faune* and when the young composers heard *Pelléas*, they recognised *L'Après-midi d'un Faune*, and adopted *Jeux* as their own. As quickly as

that Debussy was acclaimed as the father of avant-garde!

As the musical world got ready to celebrate Debussy's 100th birthday, a young curator at the *Bibliothèque nationale de France*, fell in love with Debussy's music. That curator was François Lesure, a graduate of the *École des Chartes* who had originally specialised in Renaissance music, and who was the active force behind the Debussy exhibit organised by the *Bibliothèque nationale* in 1962. It was the catalyst for everything that was to follow. All of the musicologists who have embarked on the vast enterprise of publishing the *Complete Works of Claude Debussy* must pay homage to François Lesure. In fact, the Colloquium scheduled for the beginning of February 2012 at the *Cité de la Musique*, the *Conservatoire*, the *Opéra Comique* and the *Musée d'Orsay*, will be a tribute to François Lesure. It was he who began the work on Debussy, who published the correspondence and iconography, and who undertook a critical edition of the complete works of Debussy. He established a catalogue of Debussy's body of work before later publishing a biography. François Lesure thought it was vital that scholars of Debussy have a fundamental tool for research,

and it was with this in mind that in 1972 he founded the *Centre de Documentation Claude Debussy* in Debussy's native town of Saint-Germain-en-Laye. Denis Herlin, editor-in-chief, Edmond Lemaître, managing editor, and myself, a member of the editorial committee, all owe him an enormous debt. It is no accident that the three of us have become editors of Debussy's music, for we were all students of Lesure's at the *École pratique des Hautes-Études*. The affiliation is obvious and logical.

### ***A significant contribution to the critical edition***

#### ***Pierre Boulez***

**T**he most significant contribution, the most direct and concrete, consists quite simply in correcting mistakes. Very often, and this is something that I have experienced myself, a list of mistakes is sent to the publisher. But the list gets lost somewhere on someone's desk and by the greatest of coincidences it never reaches the right person and the mistakes are never corrected. Fortunately, corrections are made by the orchestras who play the music, but it never goes farther than that. The Critical Edition takes into account all of the available data, lists the errors and then, quite simply, eliminates

them. Each correction however is justified. It is not a matter of merely erasing mistakes; each change must be explained. Sometimes this can be difficult because the exact number of versions may not be known and, especially with Debussy, no one is quite sure which version is the definitive one. Personally, I have found Debussy to be quite impulsive in his changes. For example, in *Jeux* I noticed that the figures in the bassoon line had been eliminated, probably because at the time the musicians were not capable of a light sound. In that case, should the lines be definitively eliminated or should we take into account the progress that has been made in the interpretation and the playing of the instrument? I believe that it is important to provide the information to the musicians who will be playing the score so that they may choose for themselves.

***Q: your favourite motto?***

***A: toujours plus haut !***

*—Critical edition: what's at stake*

#### ***Denis Herlin***

**D**ebussy was a phenomenally exacting composer. In his questionnaire dated February 15, 1889 – for there were questionnaires (such as the one supposedly attributed to Proust) with questions such as:

Favourite colour? What do you like to read? Favourite artist? – in answer to the question (in English) “Your favourite motto?”, Debussy replied, “Toujours plus haut!” (Always aim higher!). It is true that in his work Debussy always aimed higher; he was determined to constantly go farther and to never repeat himself, even though duplication, that is to say the principle of reiteration, was a fundamental motor and would be frequently, if clumsily, imitated by others. Only he had the particular genius necessary to take this principle and make it an integral part of his composition. He had incredibly high standards in his almost chimerical quest for the perfect orchestration, and his orchestrations would become continually more refined, more accomplished. After his first attempts in 1885 for the *Prix de Rome*, he tried a new and more subtle orchestral colour using the means at hand, that is to say orchestras who were neither particularly flexible nor receptive to his writing, and who performed stiffly. Perhaps if he had been with the Berlin Philharmonic he would have reacted differently when it came to orchestrating. He was a perfectionist, and even once a piece was published, he would never stop correcting and improving upon it.

There are two psychological types of composers. There are those who are hopefully satisfied after

their work has been published and who let their music live without touching it again; there is a separation, the umbilical cord has been cut. In Debussy's case, however, that link was never broken and we must imagine a Debussy who was fairly unsociable, often sullen – a courteous man, it is true, but nonetheless very distant. He was a 20th century composer in the sense that he watched attentively over every performance of his work. When a Parisian orchestra put any of Debussy's music on their program, there was no question but that he would be present at the rehearsals, which could sometimes cause more or less violent clashes with the conductors.

Debussy needed to oversee the performances of his pieces because he was constantly in the process of revising his work. This is one of the goals of the critical edition: to take into account and analyse Debussy's revisions. The task is a difficult one, primarily because it is necessary to find the annotated scores. We tell ourselves that we have found them all, that they are in his library, now centred at the *Fondation Royaumont*, but often there are others. One of the missions of the critical edition is to try to analyse the changes and revisions that Debussy made to his work after it was published. The process is complex, as all of the sources have been scattered.

### *So many challenges*

#### *Marie Rolf*

I have some unforgettable memories of the first times the Editorial Committee convened. There were so many challenges: how to find the principle sources, how to establish editorial principles that could be applied to all the different genres in Debussy's music, in addition to all the practical details such as the quality of the paper or the choice of font for the series of volumes. After thirty years, I am still amazed by the quantity of new sources that appear – annotated scores, new letters, and even manuscripts of entirely unknown pieces. Reconstructing Debussy's final thoughts on one of his pieces, all the while knowing that he would have hated the idea, is a task that must be undertaken with humility. The highly meticulous composer often considered that the first proofs of a score served as an opportunity to continue to revise and refine his music. Difficult as the task may seem, it is an honour and a privilege for us to be able to work so closely with the primary materials of one of the greatest and most innovative musical geniuses that ever lived.

# IMPORTANT CHALLENGES

**RÔLES**

- Mélisande
- Grisevive
- Yniold
- Pelléas
- Coloëz
- Arkel
- Le Médecin
- Le Berger (qu'on ne voit pas)
- Voix (dans la coulisse)  
C  
T  
B

**PELLÉAS ET MÉLISANDE**  
Acte I  
SCÈNE I - Une forêt  
Très modéré

**PIANO**  
*pp*

*doux et expressif*  
*pp*

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*Pelléas et Mélisande*  
vocal score published  
in 2010 (Série VI, vol  
2 ter).

# EDITING *PELLÉAS ET MÉLISANDE*: THE FIRST VOCAL SCORE THAT CONFORMS TO THE ORCHESTRAL SCORE

## OVER SIXTY SOURCES

The Critical Edition of *Pelléas et Mélisande* is the result of the analysis of an impressive number of documents:

## ORCHESTRAL SCORE

- 10 manuscripts: sketches, *particella*, the lay-out of the score, correction sheets;
- 5 sets of proofs;
- 9 editions and re-editions with or without handwritten annotations;
- 3 sources concerning the orchestral material.

## PIANO VOCAL

- 3 manuscripts of the vocal score;
- 4 sets of proofs;
- 8 printings of the score dated between 1902 and 1908, each one with its own set of transformations including short or long interludes;
- 5 annotated scores;
- 11 excerpts and arrangements published during the composer's lifetime.

## LIBRETTO

- 2 editions of the libretto;
- 3 editions of the play by Maeterlinck.

## *Denis Herlin*

The difficulty with *Pelléas* is that the original score was established by two different editors. It was initially conceived by Editions Fromont as a vocal score for use in rehearsal. Then Debussy, who wanted to retain his rights, published the vocal score himself. Later however, he was forced to sell the score during his divorce negotiations, and he gave everything to Durand. All of these details have their importance. The publishing history is highly complex and the sources are in a shambles.

The vocal score, which the *Complete Works* has published first, is in conformity with the orchestral score for the very first time. This had not previously been the case and the singers would work either off the first edition of 1902, or Durand's edition of 1907, and sometimes off another version entirely, unbelievable as it may seem. When rehearsals would begin, none of the singers had the same indications when it came to the movements, tempos, length of notes... Today the two scores finally conform.

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## *David Grayson*

The critical edition of an opera is almost inevitably a complex and delicate operation given the great number of "hands" and "voices" that participate in its creation. The final intentions of the composer, if it is possible to even discover them, are invariably shaped and moulded by the numerous professionals at the publishing companies and opera houses where the work is published and performed. In other words, the work is changed

simply from being released into the world. When one doesn't want this process to validate the decisions made by chance circumstance, one might dread the principles and habits of this or that printer or editor, or the individual aesthetic choices of a performer or a stage director. But it is better to accept that a composer cannot reach artistic maturity in a void and that these "chance" influences might contribute to his development in a positive way.

**O**n June 11, 2008 the piano four-hand version of Claude Debussy's *Première Suite d'orchestre* was heard for the first time in France. The concert took place at the United States Embassy in the presence of the ambassador and his wife, as well as America's First Lady, Laura Bush, during an exhibit entitled *Trésors retrouvés d'Orient et d'Occident*. For this event, jointly organised by Éditions Durand and the *Centre de Documentation Debussy*, the two

piano four-hands, the other was a full orchestral score but was missing the third movement. Thinking there had been a mistake, Christophe Branger consulted Denis Herlin, the Editor-in-chief of the *Complete Works* and after consultation, Denis Herlin authenticated the documents. These had been acquired by Robert O. Lehman, who had placed them in safekeeping at the illustrious New York library. They had not attracted much attention until then, escaping the notice of musicologists and musicians alike.

Dating the work remains a problem but the *Première Suite* was probably written between 1882 and 1884 during the two years that preceded Debussy's departure for the Villa Medici, a period when Debussy had not yet finished his studies at the *Conservatoire*.

The *Première Suite d'orchestre* has just been published in the piano four-hand version in Volume 9 of Série I of the *Complete Works of Claude Debussy*. The full orchestral score will be published later in Volume I of Série V.

### **World Premiere**

**T**he original version of the *Première Suite d'orchestre* has been premiered by the orchestra *Les Siècles*, under the direction of François-Xavier Roth at the *Cité de la Musique* in Paris on February 2, 2012 during the events organised to celebrate Debussy's 150th birthday. The orchestration for the missing third movement, based on the version for piano four-hands, has been entrusted to the composer, Philippe Manoury.

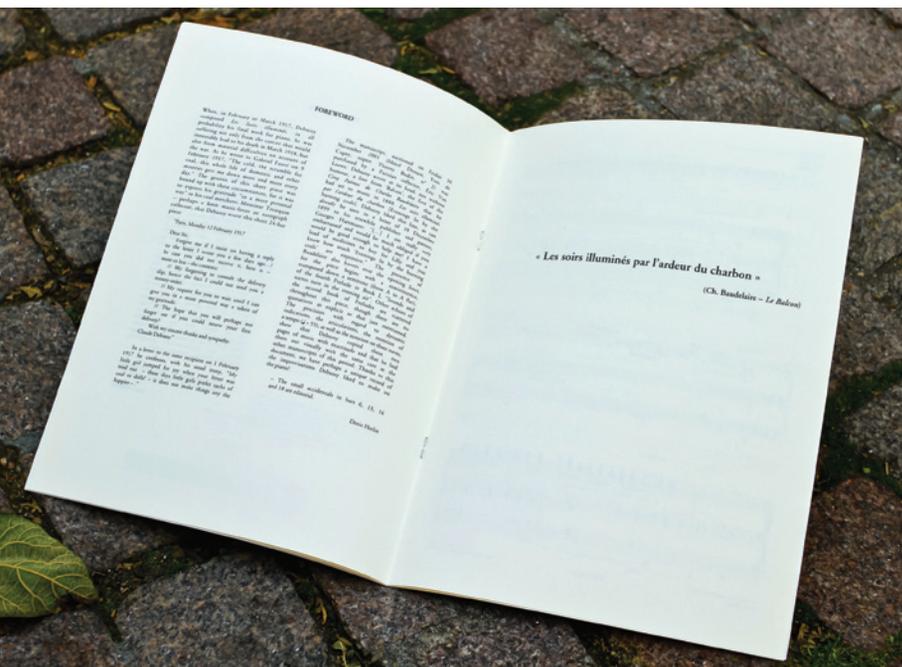
## **A FORTUITOUS DISCOVERY: PREMIÈRE SUITE D'ORCHESTRE**

pianists, Noël Lee and Alexandre Tharaud, performed the piece with the offprint from the *Complete Works*, edited by Noël Lee and Edmond Lemaître and just hot off the presses. It was a premiere!

We knew of the existence of this piece for orchestra and we knew that Debussy had created a reduction that was thought to be for two pianos. We could cite the names of the original owners of the manuscripts, but all trace of the manuscripts themselves had been lost in 1958 following a public sale.

It was while consulting the online catalogue of the Pierpont Morgan Library in New York that the musicologist Christophe Branger first noticed two manuscripts entitled *Première Suite d'orchestre*. One was a complete version with all four movements in a reduction for





# AN UNKNOWN WORK: LES SOIRS ILLUMINÉS PAR L'ARDEUR DU CHARBON

On November 30, 2001 a handwritten manuscript went up for sale at the *Hôtel Drouot* and was purchased by a Parisian collector. Éditions Durand immediately signed a copyright assignment agreement with the collector. The work had been completely unknown up until its discovery at the sale. Its title: *Les Soirs illuminés par l'ardeur du charbon*, a reprise of a verse from the *Balcon* by Baudelaire that Debussy had set to music in 1888. The genesis of this piece is directly linked to the miserable domestic life that Debussy was suffering through in February 1917, where sickness, cold, and the endless need for coal haunted his days. It was to personally thank his coal-dealer that Debussy wrote this short piece, twenty-four measures that recall “the sounds and scents that float on the evening air”, Prelude to the 1<sup>st</sup> book.

Denis Herlin published this piece as an offprint in 2003. The following year, Debussy's last piece for piano was integrated into the fourth volume of *Série I*, edited by Christophe Grabowski.

*Les Soirs illuminés par l'ardeur du charbon*, offprint preface.

## LA CHUTE DE LA MAISON USHER: THE DOCUMENTARY SOURCE

For the edition of *La Chute de la Maison Usher*, the editorial propositions to complete the music were at once pushed aside, the incompleteness of the unpublished score revealing the state in which its fragments reached us, as Denis Herlin underlined: “*La Chute de la Maison Usher*, is not simple. We took the documentary option because it was the only one possible, our purpose being not to substitute ourselves to the composer; we sometimes did it, but for *Usher* the concern is scientific.”



Chinese edition of the *Préludes* and *Etudes*. Two volumes from the *Complete Works of Claude Debussy*.

## COMPLETE WORKS OF CLAUDE DEBUSSY IN CHINA

The *Complete Works* have captivated China. The Shanghai Music Publishing House has signed a contract to publish a licensed edition of the two piano volumes: the *Préludes*, books I and II, edited by Claude Helffer and Roy Howat and the *Études*, edited by Claude Helffer. These volumes were released in 2011.

The Chinese editors adopted the

fundamental characteristics of the offprint format. The scores are released in paperback, however all the historical content retracing the genesis and premiere of each work has been integrated, as well as all of the critical notes with the various editorial variants and facsimiles. In fact, these editions are a faithful reproduction of the previously released volumes in their entirety, but

in a lighter format. Éditions Durand had already been considering this solution for some time, and in the future all of *Série I—Oeuvres pour piano*—will be reprinted in this format, distinguishable from the offprints by their content.

# OFFPRINTS



Offprints cover

When it comes to distributing Debussy's work, offprints are ideal for they display the scientific work to its fullest extent and make it available to the greatest number.

The works taken in excerpt from the bound scores are dissociated from their critical apparatus and are presented in paperback form with a "Debussy blue" cover, characteristic of the principle volumes from which they derive. The music is preceded by a short bilingual preface for the unabridged works that situates the historical context of each composition and strives, when necessary, to

provide the elements that establish the musical text as well as the most important variants.

Their distribution, at an affordable price, allows each and everyone access to the musical texts contained in the critical edition, the text of reference.

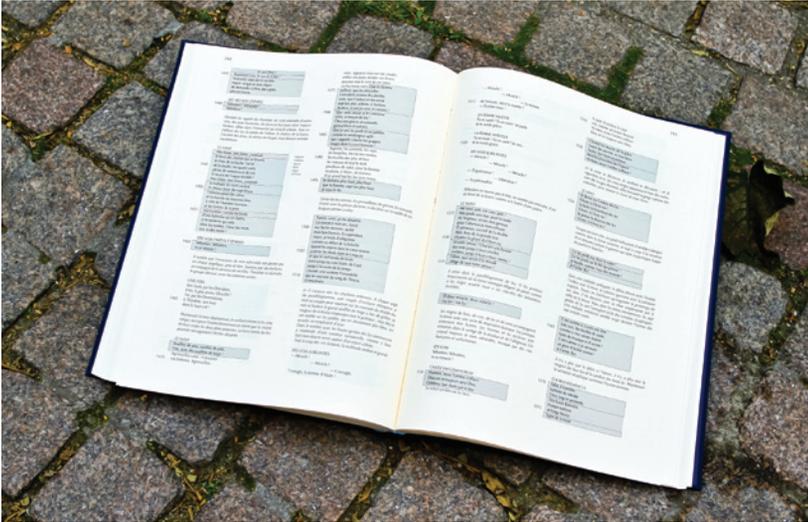
The offprints also carry out the important mission of introducing the posthumous pieces before their integration into the corpus of the This was particularly the case for *Les Soirs illuminés par l'ardeur du charbon* and the piano four-hand version of the *Première Suite d'orchestre*.

## PUBLISHING THE *MARTYRE DE SAINT SÉBASTIEN*: A PRECIOUS TOOL FOR ORCHESTRAL CONDUCTORS AND STAGE DIRECTORS ALIKE

Released in 2009, the publication of the complete "mystery" of the *Martyre de saint Sébastien* brought together Pierre Boulez and the Japanese musicologist, Eiko Kasaba. Until then, it had been very difficult to familiarise oneself with this particular piece, primarily because the work was not for sale, but only existed as a rental with all of the orchestral parts. In addition, the *partition générale* presented practically none of D'Annunzio's texts other than those put to music by Debussy, with only a few other lines to serve as cues. This critical edition, for the first time, includes all of the original text, integrated into the

body of the musical score itself. Chosen for their pertinence and assigned to Saint Sebastian, these lines form spoken interludes that, in addition to linking the musical passages, help to make the action more understandable. In addition, Gabriele D'Annunzio's entire poem – more than 3900 lines – has been placed at the end of the score. For the first time, it is possible to read this veritable ocean of a text, interspersed with its drops of music! The text is so lengthy that's several musicians have proposed an abridged version, creating a script that allows for a more reasonable time-frame; this was particularly the case for Désiré Inghelbrecht

whose version was approved by both the composer and the poet. In order to find one's way through the piece, a triple reading is proposed: 1) the text in its entirety; 2) the text that has been set to music by Debussy in brackets; 3) the text established by Inghelbrecht and approved by both Debussy and D'Annunzio in gray. In addition, Germaine Inghelbrecht's analysis of the Mansions (as the acts are called) has been included. These notes, published in Paris by Durand in 1948, were intended to accompany the performances, and they are a valuable tool for musicians, orchestra conductors, stage directors and theatre directors alike.



The three levels of reading the D'Annunzio text.

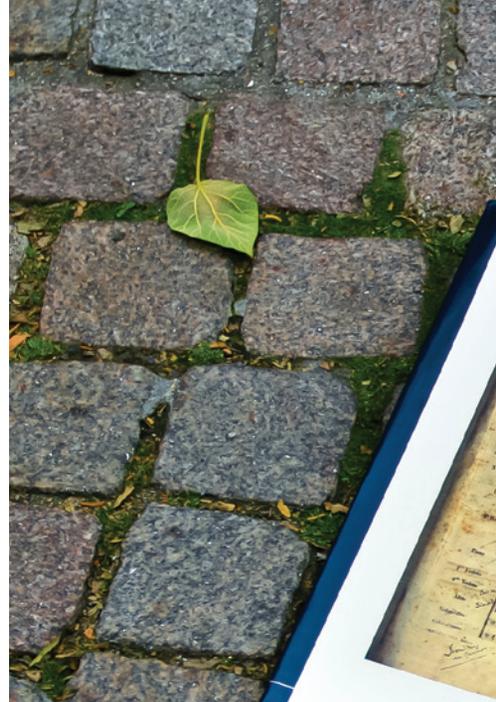


Linked text within the score.



Linked text within the score.

# A VALUABLE COMPANION TO THE COMPLETE WORKS: *LE CENTRE DE DOCUMENTATION CLAUDE DEBUSSY*



## *Documentation and Research*

*Le Centre de documentation Claude Debussy* acquires and conserves the most comprehensive documentation possible concerning the composer and his period, and makes it available to specialised researchers.

Its collections are regularly improved and kept up to date so as to assemble:

- photographic reproductions of Debussy's handwritten manuscripts (sketches, definitive manuscripts, corrected proofs, correspondence) whose originals are scattered throughout public libraries and private collections in France and abroad;
- French and foreign editions of Debussy's scores;
- books and magazines pertaining to Debussy and his era;
- concert programs, posters, photographs and any other iconographic document;
- recordings of his work.

All of those involved in the *Complete Works of Claude Debussy* regularly take advantage of this incredible tool. It is a work tool, a communications tool, in short, an indispensable organisation for specialised researchers. Its collections are conserved on the premises of the *Bibliothèque nationale de France*. Pierre Boulez acts as President, Myriam Chimènes as Secretary-General, and Edmond Lemaître as Treasurer. Conservation is ensured by Alexandra Laederich (Head Curator) and Cédric Segond-Genovesi.

*Fantaisie pour piano  
et orchestre - second  
version (Série V, vol.  
2bis) pages corrected  
and annotated by  
Debussy.*



## **Publishing the Cahiers Debussy**

Objectives:

- to show the current state of *debussyste* research in all domains;
- to resituate the composer in the artistic context of his era;
- to reissue early sources in a section entitled “Documents”;
- to publish a bibliography, a discography and a videography devoted to Debussy and to list any of his manuscripts and as well as any other documents concerning him that have passed through public sales.

## **Publishing Facsimiles of Claude Debussy's Manuscripts**

Taking particular care to respect the original format and the colours of ink and pencils, as well as the paper, the facsimiles of Debussy's handwritten manuscripts are a faithful reproduction of the originals. *Images* for piano (two volumes) has been published and “L'Album Vasnier” (third volume) is in the process of being edited.

## **Re-releasing Historical Recordings of Claude Debussy's Works**

On their own initiative, *Le Centre de documentation Claude Debussy* has created a CD collection that re-releases the historical recordings of Claude Debussy's works that have been conserved in the audiovisual department of the *Bibliothèque nationale de France*. Produced in collaboration with the *Bibliothèque nationale de France* and Ysaÿe Records, these CD's will be part of the new collection, *Ysaÿe Records in memoriam*. The release of the first CD devoted to the two series of *Images* for piano coincided with the publication of the facsimiles of the handwritten manuscripts for the same works. The second CD will be conceived along the same lines and will contain a choice of melodies, some of which are a part of “L'Album Vasnier”.

# COMPLETE WORKS OF CLAUDE DEBUSSY

## **SÉRIE I** **PIANO WORKS**

### **Volume 1\***

Danse bohémienne •  
Danse (Tarentelle  
styrienne) •  
Ballade (Ballade slave) •  
Valse romantique •  
Suite bergamasque •  
Rêverie •  
Mazurka •  
Deux Arabesques •  
Nocturne •

### **Volume 2\***

Images (1894) •  
Pour le piano •  
Children's corner •

### **Volume 3\***

Estampes •  
D'un cahier d'esquisses •  
Masques •  
L'Isle joyeuse  
Images (1<sup>ère</sup> série) •  
Images (2<sup>e</sup> série) •

### **Volume 4\***

Morceau de concours  
The little Nigar •  
Hommage à Haydn  
La Plus que lente •  
Six Épigraphes antiques  
Berceuse héroïque •  
Page d'album Pour  
l'Œuvre du « Vêtement  
du Blessé » •  
Élégie •

Les Soirs illuminés par  
l'ardeur du charbon •

### **Volume 5\***

Préludes (1<sup>er</sup> Livre) •  
Préludes (2<sup>e</sup> Livre) •

### **Volume 6\***

Études •

### **Volume 7\***

*Four-hand piano works:*  
Symphonie en si mineur •  
Andante cantabile •  
Overture Diane •  
Le Triomphe de Bacchus •  
Intermezzo •  
L'Enfant prodigue  
Divertissement •  
Printemps

### **Volume 8\***

*Two-piano works*  
Prélude à l'après-midi  
d'un faune  
Lindaraja  
En blanc et noir •

### **Volume 9\***

*Four-hand and two-  
piano works:*  
Première Suite •  
Petite Suite  
Marche écossaise  
La Mer  
Six Épigraphes antiques  
Deux Danses  
(two-piano reduction)

## **SÉRIE II** **MELODIES**

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1879 to 1882  
*Four unpublished  
melodies:*  
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Le matelot qui tombe  
à l'eau •  
Romance •  
Les Elfes •

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### **Volume 3**

1887 to 1893

### **Volume 4**

1897 to 1915  
Nuits blanches •

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### **Volume 1**

Trio for piano, violin  
and cello  
Nocturne et Scherzo for  
cello and piano  
Quatuor à cordes

### **Volume 2**

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les Chansons de Bilitis  
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piano  
Petite Pièce for clarinet  
and piano

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Syrinx for solo flute

### **Volume 3**

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piano  
Sonate for flute, viola  
and harp  
Sonate for violin and  
piano

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Le Gladiateur  
L'Enfant prodigue  
(1st version)

### **Volume 2**

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choir and orchestra  
(1882)  
Invocation  
Le Printemps for choir  
and orchestra (1884)  
Chœur des brises  
Hélène  
Églogue  
Hymnis  
Diane au bois

### **Volume 3**

Printemps (2 versions)  
La Damoiselle élue

**Volume 4**

La Saulaie  
 L'Enfant prodigue  
 (2nd version)  
 Trois Chansons de  
 Charles d'Orléans  
 Noël des enfants qui  
 n'ont plus de maison  
 Ode à la France

**SÉRIE V**  
**ORCHESTRAL**  
**WORKS**
**Volume 1**

Intermezzo  
 Première Suite  
 d'orchestre  
 Marche écossaise  
 Prélude à l'après-midi  
 d'un faune

**Volume 2**

Fantaisie pour piano et  
 orchestre (1st version)

**Volume 2 bis\***

Fantaisie pour piano et  
 orchestre (2nd version)•

**Volume 3\***

Nocturnes

**Volume 4**

Rapsodie for saxophone  
 and orchestra

Deux Danses for harp  
 and orchestra  
 Rapsodie for clarinet and  
 orchestra

**Volume 5\***

La Mer

**Volume 6**

Images

**Volume 7**

Khamma

**Volume 8\***

Jeux

**Volume 9**

La Boîte à joujoux

**Volume 10**

Le Martyre de saint  
 Sébastien (symphonic  
 fragments)

**Volume 11**

*Orchestrations:*  
 La plus que lente  
 Berceuse héroïque  
 Le Jet d'eau  
 De Grève  
 Trois Ballades de  
 François Villon  
 Gymnopédies 1 et 3  
 by Érik Satie

**SÉRIE VI**  
**LYRICAL WORKS**
**Volume 1\***

Rodrigue et Chimène

**Volume 2**

Pelléas et Mélisande

**Volume 2 bis**

Pelléas et Mélisande  
 comments

**Volume 2 ter\***

Pelléas et Mélisande  
 (vocal score)

**Volume 3\***

Le Roi Lear  
 Le Diable dans le beffroi  
 La Chute de la Maison  
 Usher

**Volume 4\***

Le Martyre de saint  
 Sébastien

\*Released Volumes

• Offprints



Claude Debussy and his daughter Chouchou on the Houlgate beach, 1911.



# THE DEBUSSY COMMISSION

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Claude Debussy on  
the Houlgate beach,  
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Claude Debussy and his parents, around 1906.

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