

(List D) *La fille aux cheveux de lin* Prelude 8 from Bk 1 by Debussy

Title:

‘Girl with the flaxen hair’ – taken/adapted from poem by Leconte de Lisle (

Notation:

Tres calme et doucement expressif – very calm and with sweet expression

p sans rigueur – soft without rigidity/strictness

Cédez – held back

Mouv – movement – a tempo, return to original speed

Piu p – more soft

Un peu anime – a little animated

Au movt (sans loudéur) – return to original tempo, without heaviness

Tres doux – very sweetly

Murmure et en retenant peu a peu – whispered and slower little by little

Perdendosi – dying away

Tres peu – very little

Form and keys:

Main theme in Gb pentatonic (or Eb pentatonic minor)

Section A: Bars 1 to 16 – moves through Gb pentatonic. Modulates bar 6 to Eb major but only temporarily. At bar 16 Cb major.

Section B: Bar 17 or Bar 19 – Eb major. Climax at bar 21 in Cb major.

Section A1 (many differences): Bar 24 Gb major – augmented outline/contour of main theme. Then at bar 28 – original theme.

Coda at bar 33 (or bar 35).

Period:

Early 20th century – sometimes called ‘Impressionist’ (though Debussy hated the word being applied to his music) and also associated with the ‘Symbolist’ period.

Style:

Piece: pastoral style, utilises pentatonic scales, 7^{ths} and 9^{ths} (Debussy favoured), atmospheric calm quality, enhanced by pedaling and wide range of warm chords. Uses layers/texture.

Impressionist: “The **impressionist movement in music** was a movement in European [classical music](#), mainly in France, that began in the late nineteenth century and continued into the middle of the twentieth century. Like its precursor in the visual arts, musical [Impressionism](#) focused on suggestion and atmosphere rather than strong emotion or the depiction of a story as in [program music](#). Musical Impressionism occurred as a reaction to the excesses of the [Romantic era](#). While this era was characterized by a dramatic use of the [major](#) and [minor](#) scale system, Impressionist music tends to make more use of [dissonance](#) and more uncommon scales such as the [whole tone scale](#). Romantic composers also used long forms of music such as the [symphony](#) and [concerto](#), while Impressionist composers favored short forms such as the [nocturne](#), [arabesque](#), and [prelude](#).”

Composer:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Claude_Debussy

Genres: 1 opera (*Pelleas et Melisande*), piano works – preludes, images, pour le piano, childrens corner, suite bergamasque, estampes, orchestral works – jeux (ballet suite), la mer, prelude to the afternoon of a faun, string quartet.