

REVERIE by Debussy

Written 1890 (early work) - Suite Bergamasque is similar period.

Sans lenteur - without slowness

tres doux et tres expressif - very sweetly and very expressive

un peu retenu - a little held back

rit e perendosi - slower and dying away (getting softer and getting slower)

<http://www.tcd.ie/Music/JF%20History/debussy.html>

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."

Impressionism was developed by French painters who tried to capture their first impression of a subject through varied treatments of light and colour (often texturally with contrasting colours next to each other that look ok from distance but not up close). The literary equivalent was Symbolism in which writings are suggestive of images and ideas rather than literally descriptive.

Impressionism in music is characterised by exotic scales (chromatic, whole tone, pentatonic etc), unresolved dissonances, parallel chord, rich orchestral colour, and free rhythm, in small-forms, sometimes programmatic (but Debussy's tend to be suggestive rather than descriptive, hence the parallel to Symbolism - eg the titles come after the works not before).

"François Lesure suggests that **Rêverie**, published in 1891 by Choudens, had been written a year earlier. The piece was dismissed by Debussy who in 1904 wrote to the publisher, Eugène Fromont, complaining about his decision to republish it. It is reminiscent of Borodin's *Petit suite* textures and contradicts those critics saying that Debussy was not capable of writing a true melody. "

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.

Other composers: Ravel, Chabrier, Faure, Franc

*** Similarities between Reverie and Prelude - similar time and motif of Bb-C-D-G / G-D-C-Bb.