

Claude Debussy
Three Preludes
“Bruyères,” “Des Pas,” and “Général Lavine”

arranged for percussion trio
by David Reeves



Three Preludes by Debussy, arr. by David Reeves
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the preludes

Claude Debussy's timeless piano preludes originate from two collections – Book I and Book II. There are several books available to learn more about Debussy and his piano preludes. I found these resources insightful and inspirational during the arranging process. Two books stood out as particularly helpful.

The Piano Works of Claude Debussy by E. Robert Schmitz and Images *The Piano Music of Claude Debussy* by Paul Roberts give performance suggestions, score analysis, and background information on each prelude as well as insight into the ordering of the preludes as they are originally ordered.

Bruyères (Heather)

This is the fifth prelude from book II. It evokes serene scenes of nature and nostalgia. The performers are encouraged to let the music breathe, and to achieve this a thorough understanding of the score is necessary. The appoggiaturas that occur in the timpani part (measures 8, 11, 38, 41, and 44) are worth mentioning. For obvious physical reasons the appoggiaturas were a necessary technique in a solo piano performance. In the trio context they are not necessary, but after listening to the piano recordings for so many years, prior to writing the arrangements, these appoggiaturas became part of the music and greatly affect the pacing. The grace note should receive the accent and establish the sound. The roll should follow but within the sound (e.g. don't re-attack the roll). Measure 43 should slow down considerably as marked to allow time for the marimbist to switch mallets.

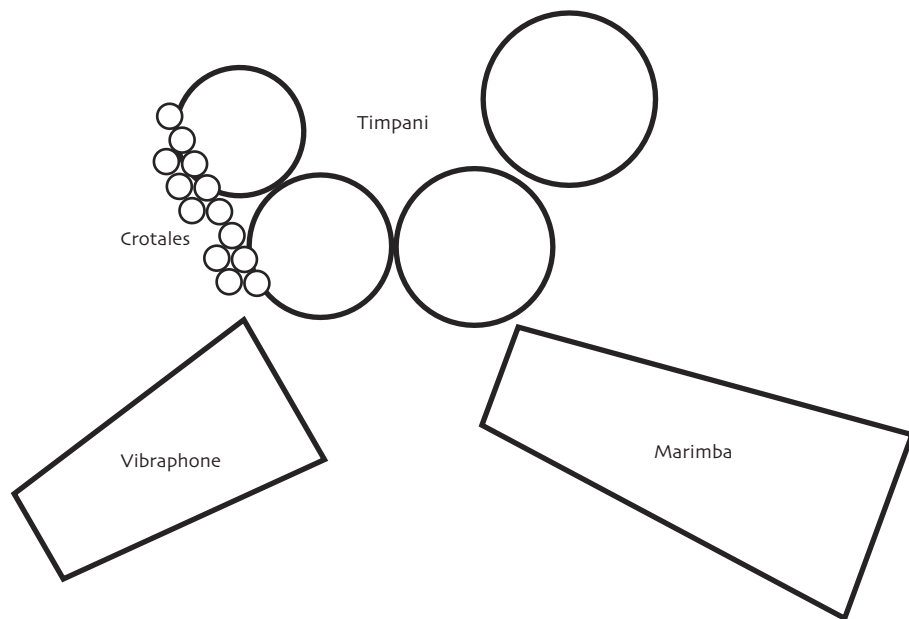
Des pas sur la neige (Footsteps in the snow)

The sixth prelude from book I brings to mind a desolate barren white snowscape. The ostinato, which is present almost entirely throughout, in Debussy's words "should have the aural value of a melancholy, snowbound landscape." Dynamic expression and a heightened musical sensitivity within the trio is crucial to communicate the distance and coldness of this prelude. In the timpani part in measure 22, the roll may stop to accommodate the beat one rhythm. Allow an appropriate amount of time to cleanly and calmly execute the rhythm and then quickly "sneak" back into the roll before re-attacking on beat three. Mallet muting is encouraged for the vibraphone player to keep the sound from getting too washed out. Use your musical discretion.

Général Lavine ("Général Lavine" – excentric)

The sixth prelude from book II illustrates the art of clowning and honors its hero, Edward Lavine. Born in America, Lavine was a celebrated Vaudeville actor and performed in Paris where Debussy probably saw him in the early 1890's. The prelude is humorous and should be performed with a light and spontaneous wit. The pace is quick and relies on a total commitment to ensemble communication. The low C in the timpani part, measure 11, is pushing the range limits of the drum. The upper C will help establish the desired pitch and besides, the effect is more about the dynamic force and accent than perfectly centered octave C's. In the marimba part, measure 12, the C# grace note is easiest played by the inside mallet of the left hand. The grace note should connect smoothly to the one-handed roll in the right hand. Pay particular attention to the slurs in the vibraphone part throughout the prelude. This will be most effectively demonstrated with the pedal.

instrumentation, suggested setup

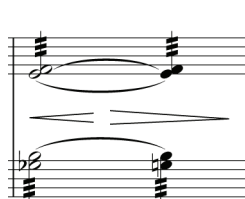


Instruments needed:

- Vibraphone
- Marimba - 4 1/3 octave (low A)
- Four Timpani (32", 29", 26", 23")
- Crotales (two octaves preferred, one octave sufficient)

roll notation

In this arrangement, you'll notice different styles of roll notation for marimba and vibes. Traditional rolls (both mallets in each hand strike together like a double-stop) are indicated with typical slashes. Ripple rolls are written with the S notation, and one-handed rolls will be written with the oval indication. Since these types of rolls sound quite different, it warrants differentiating the notation.



traditional roll



one-handed roll



ripple roll

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Bruyères

Prelude No. V from Book II

Claude Debussy
arr. by David Reeves

Calm - softly and expressively

♩ = 66

med. cord

Vibraphone

Marimba

Timpani & Crotales

p *mp* *p* *mp*

med-soft yarn

p *mp* *mp* *p*

E ♭, B ♭, D, F

soft timp. sticks

29"

p *mp* *p* *mp* *mf*

Vib.

Mar.

Timp. Crot.

mf *3* *mp* *mf* *3* *p*

mf *mp*

mp *p* *mp*

Vib.

Mar.

Timp. Crot.

p *3* *p* *3*

p

Crotales
very small metal beater

p

Timp.

Sample
Image

Three Preludes - arr. Reeves

19 **Soft and light**

Vib. *pp* *p*

Mar. *pp* *p*

Timp. Crot. *pp* *p* To Timpani

23 **A bit lively**

Vib. *p* *playfully* *3* *expressively* *mf*

Mar. *p* *mf* *p* *mf*

Timp. Crot. *p* *expressively* *mf*

27 *3* *p* *più p* *3* *p*

Mar. *3* *p*

Timp. Crot. *29"* *p*

Sample
Image

Three Preludes- arr. Reeves

35

Vib. *p mp* *p* *mf*

Mar. *p* *mf* *p* *mf*

Timp. Crot. *mf*

Slower A tempo

41

Vib. *mf* *p* *p*

Mar. *mf* *v* *mp*

Timp. Crot. *p*

molto rit. Slower calm and soft

(very soft yarn)

46

Vib. *più p*

Mar. *p* softly sustained

Timp. Crot. *p* softly sustained

Ritardando

Sample
Image

Des Pas

Prelude No. VI from Book I

Claude Debussy
arr. by David Reeves

Sad and Slow
♩ = 44

Vibraphone
med. cord
p *expressively and sorrowful*
pp < > < > *più pp* > *pp* > *sempre*

Marimba
very soft yarn
pp

Timpani & Crotales
G, Ab, C, F#
soft timp. sticks
pp

6

pp
pp
simile

right hand: med-soft yarn
pp *expressively*

Crotales
very small metal beater
pp
Timpani

Crotales

Sample
Image

Three Preludes- arr. Reeves

Slower

Vib. *p* *mp* //

Mar. *p* *mp* //

Timp. Crot. *sp* *pp* *ppp* *mp* *mp* *p* *meno mosso* //

very soft yarn

Timpani

Crotales

Timpani

Slower A tempo

Vib. *pp* *mf* //

Mar. //

Timp. Crot. //

pressing and tender

Sample
Image

Three Preludes - arr. Reeves

22

Vib. *mp grad. dim.* *meno mosso* *p* *pp* *A tempo*

Mar. *mp grad. dim.* *pp*

Timp. Crot. *mp grad. dim.* *p* *pp* *right hand: small metal beater* *left hand: soft timp. sticks*

27

Vib. *mp* *With tender and sad regret*

Mar. *med-hard* *p* *mp*

Timp. Crot. *pp* *Crotales* *(Crot.)* *mp* *Timpani*

More slow *Very slow* *dying* *ppp*

very soft yarn *ppp*

pp *ppp* *Timpani* *ppp*

Sample
Image

Général Lavine

Prelude No. VI from Book II

Claude Debussy
arr. by David Reeves

In the style and tempo of a cakewalk

med-hard cord

Vibraphone

f *strident*

med-hard yarn

Marimba

p *p* *f*

C, F, C, F

Timpani & Crotales

6

Sprightly and reserved

Vib.

mp *f* *p*

Mar.

ff *p* *mf* *p*

med-hard sticks

Timp. Crot.

fff *v* *v* *n*

13

Vib.

mp

Mar.

p *mp*

Timp. Crot.

ppp *mp*

Sample
Image

Three Preludes - arr. Reeves

20

Vib.

Mar.

Timp. Crot.

mf mp

p mf p

ppp p ppp p

27

Vib.

Mar.

Timp. Crot.

accel. molto staccato

molto. cresc.

molto rit.

f

molto staccato

molto. cresc.

f

f

A tempo

p

mp grad. cresc.

mp grad. cresc.

p

grad. cresc.

Sample
Image

Three Preludes- arr. Reeves

40

Vib.

Mar.

Timp.
Crot.

f

p

f

sf

f

ff

mf

mf

ff

46

Vib.

Mar.

Timp.
Crot.

Lingering

A tempo

p

p

f

p

52

Vib.

Mar.

Timp.
Crot.

pp

Sample
Image

Three Preludes - arr. Reeves

58 **A tempo**

Vib. *p*

Mar. *p sub.*

Timp. Crot. (do not roll) *p* Crotales small metal beater l.v. Timpani Crotales l.v.

63 **Molto meno mosso**

Vib. *mf* *f* *ff*

Mar. *mf* *f* *ffp*

Timp. Crot. *f* *ff* *f*

A tempo

p *mp* *mp* *ppp* *mp*

Sample
Image

Three Preludes- arr. Reeves

75

Vib.

Mar.

Timp. Crot.

sf

p

sf

p

pp

ppp

p

82

Vib.

Mar.

Timp. Crot.

mp

pp

mp

p

pp

88

Vib.

Mar.

Timp. Crot.

molto cresc.

Mu

Sample
Image

A tempo

102

Vib.

f *ff* *sff*

Mar.

f *ff* *sff*

Sample Image

