

Claude Debussy, Preludes, Book I

Debussy’s Preludes are divided into two parts. Book I was composed in a short time between December 1909 and February 1910. Each Prelude has a title. Debussy took great care in assigning these titles, and several contain quotations from various poems. The titles are placed at the end of each prelude, a deliberate decision by Debussy that was meant to suggest the mood of each piece.

- I. Danseuses de Delphe: Lent et grave (Dancers of Delphi)

II. Voiles: Modéré (Veils / sails)

III. Le vent dans la plaine: Animé (The Wind in the Plain)

IV. Les sons et les parfums tournent dans l’air du soir: Modéré (The sounds and fragrances swirl through the evening air)

V. Le Les collines d’Anacapri: Très modéré (The Hills of Anacon)

VI. Des pas sur la neige: Triste et lent (Footsteps in the Snow)

VII. Ce qu’a vu le vent d’ouest: Animé et tumultueux (What the West Wind has seen)
- VIII. La fille aux cheuus de lin: Très calme et doucement expressif (The Girl with the Flaxen Hair)

IX. La sérénade interrompue: Modérément animé (Interrupted Serenade)

X. La cathédral engloutie: Profondément calme (The Submerged Cathedral)

XI. La danse de Puck: Capricieux et léger (Puck’s Dance)

XII. Minstrels: Modéré

About Ilya Itin
“Itin’s is a rare and exciting artistry indeed...poised, pure, and ravishing in its range of colour, Itin’s playing is a prime example of a superb technique put at the service of an inquiring and imaginative mind.”
—Daily Telegraph, London

Audiences throughout the world revere Ilya Itin’s unique artistry. Playing to sold out houses in Asia and the US, he is known for his extraordinary range, quality of sound and powerful command of the piano. His recent Princeton recital was singled out as a “top ten musical moment of the year” by the Philadelphia Inquirer, and in the New York Times he was described as: “...a brilliantly insightful pianist who offered a superb recital “.

Since capturing the Gold Medal, BBC Audience Award, and Contemporary Music Prize at the 1996 Leeds International Piano Competition, Ilya Itin has performed throughout the world bringing his powerful musical imagination and mastery to wide ranging repertoire. “I’d go to hear him play the phonebook,” remarked BBC TV critic Ian Burnside.

Ilya Itin has performed with many of the world’s great conductors, including Sir Simon Rattle, Neemi Jarvi, Christoph von Dohnanyi, Yakov Kreizberg, Vassily Sinaisky, Valery Polyansky, and Mikhail Pletnev, with orchestras, including the Cleveland Orchestra, the St. Petersburg Philharmonic, the Tokyo Symphony, the National Symphony, the London Philharmonic, the China National Symphony, the Symphony Orchestra of India; the Mexico City Philharmonic; and the Rochester Philharmonic.

Mr. Itin is a sought after teacher giving master classes throughout Asia, and in Princeton, Miami, and New York. His students have garnered top prizes in international competitions, and awards at the most competitive conservatories in the US and Asia.

Born in Yekaterinburg, Russia, his piano studies began at the Sverdlovsk School for the Gifted with Natalia Litvinova. He went on to graduate from the Moscow Conservatory with the highest honors, working with legendary teacher Lev Naumov. Mr. Itin won his first major piano competition as a student at the Conservatory, taking second place in the 1990 Russian National Rachmaninov Competition. Soon after, he won top honors in the William Kapell Competition, followed by First Prize, and the Special Chopin Prize at the Casadesus Competition (Cleveland Competition), and the Best Performance of a Work of Mozart, Best Prokofiev Performance, and Third Prize at the Gina Bachauer Competition.

Ilya Itin resides in Tokyo, Japan, and New York City where he is on the teaching faculties of the Musashino Academy, Tokyo, the Academy of the Miami International Piano Festival and the Golandsky Institute.

Ilya Itin on Debussy
The process of recording has an almost grueling intensity which adds another dimension to a performer’s search for the music’s essence. The notion of music being “frozen architecture” becomes even more meaningful when we deal with recorded music. We try, perhaps in vain, to capture the “uncapturable”. Isn’t that what great music does? Debussy takes an ordinary moment, a “cell” of life, as in a hint at the Marseillaise in the final Prelude, and imbues it with a sense of eternity and otherworldly significance. Debussy himself is “recording” human experience, revealing veiled messages ranging from bemused comedy to the shards of a shattered universe. Ever fascinating and often terrifying...

About the Recording
Some time ago I received a call from my dear friend David Rawn inquiring as to my familiarity with a pianist named Ilya Itin. I told him I had none and asked why. With great enthusiasm David told me how impressed he was with Ilya’s musicianship and unique sound and asked if I would be willing to help get Ilya recorded. I said I knew some people who might be able to help and gave David their information.

I thought quite a bit about the call with David and I became very intrigued and started doing a bit of research. After watching a video of Ilya playing Rachmaninov, I was mesmerized and started understanding David’s passion for Ilya’s sound. I was extremely moved and felt highly motivated to get more involved. I called David back and we decided on taking on the project ourselves.

Knowing we wanted to capture the performances in the highest possible resolution, for analog we decided to record to 30 I.P.S., ½ tape and simultaneously for digital, to Quad DSD (DSD256). Our intention at all times was to stay as true to the live performance as possible. There was no noise reduction, no limiting and no compression used at any time during this recording.

For production and engineering, bringing in Grammy Award winners Thom Moore, Rob Friedrich and Michael Bishop of Five/Four Productions seemed the logical thing to do. Ilya Itin is one of the most exciting pianists in the world today and we wanted to make sure the recording was worthy of his performance.

David and I take great pleasure in sharing Ilya Itin with you and we hope you find his work and this recording as exciting and moving as we do.

—Jonathan Tinn

Executive Producers: David Rawn and Jonathan Tinn
Producer/Editor: Thomas C. Moore - Five/Four Productions
Recording and Mastering Engineer: Robert Friedrich—Five/Four Productions
Analog Tape Editing: Michael Bishop - Five/Four Productions
Analog Tape Machine Guru and Operator: Dan Labrie—ATR Services, Inc.
Artistic Director: Adrienne Sirken
Album Cover Design: Gillian McCallion
Photography: Chris Bentley

Recorded: February 2015—The New York Academy of Arts and Letters

Microphone: Sanken CO100
Microphone Preamplifiers: UpState Audio Sonic Lens 20/20; Millenia Media HV-3D
Console: Millenia Mix Suite
Analog Recording System: ATR Services Ampex ATR-102 1/2” 2 Track 30 I.P.S.
Analog Tape: ATR Master Tape
Digital Recording System: Pyramix 11.2 DSD Recorder

Ilya Itin would like to thank Executive Producer, David Rawn for initiating the idea for this recording, persuading him to do it and fully supporting the project. He is also very grateful to Executive Producer, Jonathan Tinn for giving him the opportunity to be recorded by the extraordinary sound engineers, Thom Moore, and Rob Friedrich, whose artistic and technical wizardry enabled his performances to sound both live and alive. Ilya would also like to thank Vivien Chu at Steinway and Sons who provided a New York Steinway D for this recording. Last, but not least, he gives special thanks to Adrienne Sirken who oversaw the recording and made sure that Mr. Itin did not go insane in the process!

Special thanks to: Marjorie Rawn, Dr. Lindsey Nelson, Bette Spitz, Nancy Leu, Charles Tinn, Nancy Rommelmann and Fernanda Friedrich

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Preludes Book I

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