

## **Claude Debussy (1862-1918)**

- He grew up in Paris, a young pianist living in poverty but surrounded by wealthy patrons; he entered the Paris Conservatory in 1873;
- He won the Grand Prix de Rome 1884 to stay for three years in the Villa Medici in Rome but abandoned his work there and returned to Paris;
- His early work included *Clair de lune* and *La Demoiselle elue*;
- He was influenced by the Pre-Raphaelites, particularly Dante Gabriel Rossetti (*La Demoiselle elue* is based on the 1850 poem *The Blessed Damsel*);
- His later work was inspired by Edgar Allan Poe and J.M.W. Turner. He said his 1905 *The Mer* was what he heard while looking at the work of Turner and Claude Monet;
- His series of love affairs inspired and distracted his work; he wrote many works for children and was not shy about attributing them to his daughter, Claude-Emma (a combination of both parent's first names), though she was called Chouchou;
- He is known for his 21-note scale, designed to alter the sense of tonality;
- He also used instruments differently in orchestral arrangements than their traditional voices;
- He died of cancer in his late 50s.

### ***Prelude a l'apres-midi d'un faune* (1894)**

Not the first Mallarme poem that Debussy set to music;  
Mallarme's *Apparition* (1863) poem, and then Debussy's song (1864);

Debussy is said to have characterized the *Faune* work this way:

"The music of this *Prelude* is a very free illustration of the beautiful poem...by no means does it claim to be a synthesis of the latter.."(p.14, William W. Austin, *Claude Debussy, An Authoritative Score*, 1970, Norton & Co.)

The score:

3 Flutes; 2 Oboes; 1 English Horn; 2 Clarinets; 2 Bassoons; 4 Horns; 2 Harps; ancient cymbals;  
1st violin; 2nd violin; viola; cello, double bass;

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Key of E major

9/8 time

Quarter/dot note = 44

@M 5, 6/8 time

@M 11, 9/8 time

@M 21, 12/8 time

@M 22, 9/8 time

@M 23, 12/8 time

@M 24, 9/8 time

@M 26, 12/8 time

@M 27, 9/8

Etc.

And there is more... quarter note=55; quarter note =60; quarter note= 84 throughout the score.



(Natalia Ensemble performs in 2014:

—Shannon Martin, November 2024