

C L A R E L O N G E N D Y K E



TRACK LISTING

1. Préludes, Livre I: La Cathédrale engloutie

Claude Debussy 6:46

2. Piano Portraits, Book II: Olga

Amy Williams 3:27

3. Préludes, Livre I: Voiles

Claude Debussy 4:26

4. Piano Portraits, Book I: Yvar

Amy Williams 4:12

5. Préludes, Livre I: « Les sons et les parfums tournent dans l'air du soir » *Claude Debussy* 4:15

6. Préludes, Livre I: Les collines d'Anacapri

Claude Debussy 3:55

7. Piano Portraits, Book II: Frieda

Amy Williams 2:05

8. Préludes, Livre I: La danse de Puck

Claude Debussy 3:06

9. Piano Portraits, Book II: Nils

Amy Williams 3:21

10. Préludes, Livre I: Des pas sur la neige

Claude Debussy 4:48

11. Fugue — suivant « Des pas sur la neige »

Anthony R. Green 2:20

12. Préludes, Livre II: Brouillards

Claude Debussy 3:25

13. Piano Portraits, Book I: Helena

Amy Williams 2:14

14. Préludes, Livre II: Canope

Claude Debussy 3:15

15. Préludes, Livre II: La puerta del Vino

Claude Debussy 3:34

16. Piano Portraits, Book I: Ursula

Amy Williams 3:07

17. Préludes, Livre II: La terrasse des audiences du clair de lune *Claude Debussy* 4:47

18. Préludes, Livre I: Hommage à S. Pickwick Esq. P.P.M.P.C. *Claude Debussy* 2:55

19. Préludes, Livre II: Feux d'artifice

Claude Debussy 5:19

20. To Anacreon in the US

Anthony R. Green 5:34

Total Time 76:50

Debussy's « Voiles » (“Veils” or “Sails”), is said to have been inspired by costumes that the pioneering American dancer, Loïe Fuller (1862–1928), wore on stage: long panels of colorful silks attached to her leotard that billowed as she moved. The layering of voices and textures in « Voiles » reflects similar characteristics in Williams's portrait of her graduate school piano teacher, Yvar Mikhashoff (1941–93). In “Yvar,” a repeating low bass note elicits a world of iridescent colors in the sounding harmonics. This shimmering musical haze leads seamlessly into the flexible poetry of « Les sons et les parfums tournent dans l'air du soir » “Sounds and Smells Swirl in the Evening Air”), inspired by the third verse of French poet Charles Baudelaire's (1821–67) poem, « Harmonie du soir », in which “The violin vibrates like a grieving heart.”

« Les collines d'Anacapri » (“The Hills of Anacapri”) feels like a rollicking joy ride around the Italian island of Capri. The winding switchbacks evolve into cascading scales and arpeggios in “Frieda,” a musical homage to Williams's high school piano teacher. This group ends with Debussy's depiction of Shakespeare's capricious sprite, Puck, from *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, in « La danse de Puck » (“Puck's Dance”). The fairy flits and darts through the prelude, making mischief and magic at every turn.

Though Williams's portrait “Nils” is named for composer and pianist Nils Vigeland (b. 1950), it also reflects the gentle softness of American composer Morton Feldman's (1926–87) music, which Vigeland championed. The silently depressed keys and whispered releases of “Nils” foreshadow the next piece, Debussy's melancholic « Des pas sur la neige » (“Footsteps in the Snow”). Despite its serene opening and tender melody, the music is characterized by a sense of sadness and longing that one might associate with the winter blues. Green's “Fugue — suivant « Des pas sur la neige »” (“Fugue — To Follow ‘Footsteps in the Snow’,” composed in 2022), capitalizes on the emotion of the prelude's climax in a stormy and blizzard-like response to the original.

Snow melts to fog in Debussy's prelude « Brouillards » (“Fogs”), where hazy dissonances shroud sharp bursts of light and color. In “Helena,” dedicated to Williams's long-time friend and piano duo partner, Helena Bugallo, long pedals combined with overlapping melodies in the piano's highest register create a cloudy, impressionistic atmosphere. The mist of the first two gives way to the nobility of « Canope » (Egyptian canopic jars or urns), in which the opening harmonic progression hangs in the air, setting the mysterious tone for the rest of the piece.

A passion-filled habanera defines « La puerta del Vino » (“The Wine Gate”), a musical imagining of the Moorish gate near Grenada’s Alhambra Palace, as seen by Debussy on a postcard. The left hand’s rhythmic ostinato continues into the next portrait, transforming into a jaunty jazz-inspired bass line in “Ursula.” Dedicated to one of my own modern piano heroines who happens to be a close friend of Williams’s, Ursula Oppens (b. 1944), the piece imitates Ursula’s uncanny agility at the keyboard. The set ends on a quieter note with Debussy’s « La terrasse des audiences du clair de lune » (“The Terrace of Moonlit Audiences”), whose ethereal, cascading scales create an atmosphere of awe and wonderment, a shimmering juxtaposition to the quick-paced virtuosity of the preceding piece.

The final group begins with Debussy’s « Hommage à S. Pickwick Esq. P.P.M.P.C. » based on Charles Dickens’s (1812–70) eponymous protagonist from *The Pickwick Papers*. The kind and generous Englishman, whose benevolence often gets the better of him, is depicted in a piece rife with satire, as one can only expect from a Frenchman poking fun at the English. « Feux d’artifice » (“Fireworks”) shows Debussy at his most patriotic, painting a musical tableau of Bastille Day fireworks so true to life, you might feel as though you are in Paris watching an impressive pyrotechnic display. The piece ends with a fading chant of the chorus from « La Marseillaise » and a rumbling low bass tremolo, signaling the end of the festivities, the piece, and the *Préludes*. On this album, however, Debussy does not get the last note: the low rumble of the fireworks connects seamlessly to the opening turmoil of Anthony R. Green’s *To Anacreon in the US* (2019), a “postlude,” as he calls it, to the Debussy prelude. Using the American national anthem as its primary theme, Green’s piece teases apart the main melody, transforming and developing the music in impressionistic, Debussy-esque ways.

The album’s elusive title derives from my favorite Debussy quote: « La musique, c’est du rêve dont on écarte les voiles. Ce n’est même pas l’expression d’un sentiment, c’est le sentiment même ». / “Music is dreams from which we part the veils. It is not the expression of feeling, it is feeling itself.”

C R E D I T S

Produced and edited by Daniel Stein

Recorded, mixed and mastered by Dan Nichols at Aphorism Studios

Cover Design by Steve Criado

Photographs by Nick Zoulek - NZ Media

Recorded in June 2021 and July 2023 at Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, IL

CLARE LONGENDYKE

A pianist with “an artistic ferocity that captivated and astonished listeners” (Waverly Newspapers), Clare Longendyke performs with orchestras and on recital series around the world. A charming and charismatic performer, her passion for the music she plays radiates through her highly expressive and colorful artistry. Her commitment to the music of our time shines through her programming, which celebrates works by composers of the past while creating space for those that are paving the way towards classical music’s more inclusive future.

Clare has performed on three continents, including on concert stages in twenty American states. Her playing has been heard on classical radio programs around North America, including on NPR’s Performance Today. She has lived and studied on both American coasts and abroad, earning an undergraduate degree at Boston University’s College of Fine Arts and her Master’s and Doctor of Music degrees from the Indiana University Jacobs School of Music. She received the Fulbright–Harriet Hale Woolley Award in the Arts to study music at the École normale de musique in Paris in 2009.

Clare’s dedication to shaping the classical music field manifests in her many collaborations with living composers. Since 2013, she has commissioned over 30 new solo piano and chamber music works and been involved in over 200 world premiere performances. She relishes the opportunity to put her stamp on new pieces that will go on to be staples of the piano repertoire. For Clare, performance is just one aspect of her role as an ambassador for classical music in today’s world. The connections she makes on concert stages, in classrooms, and everywhere in between help to foster a greater sense of community for the classical music field that she cares about so deeply.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To Amy and Anthony, for writing music that inspires me. To all of the supporters and patrons who made this album possible, and to the Robert Turnbull Piano Foundation.

To my mom, for the idea. And to Stephen, for helping me protect Priority One, always. I love you.