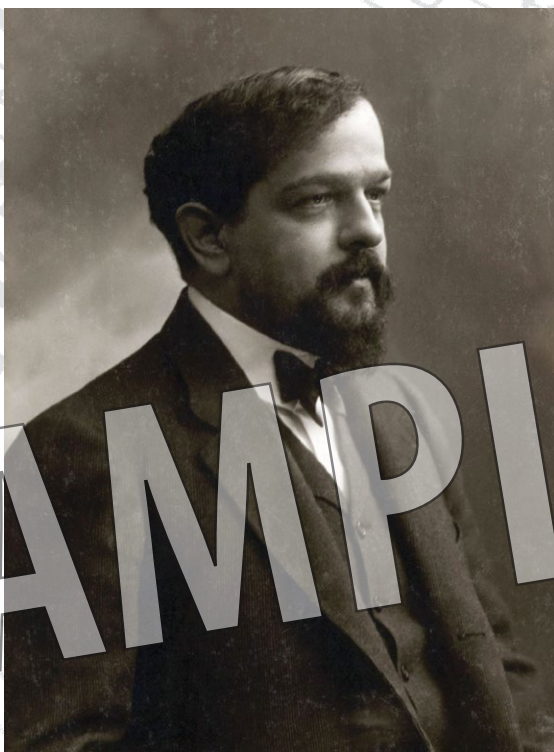


Simply Charlotte Mason presents

Music Study With the Masters

by Rebekah Carlson



DEBUSSY

*“Let the young people hear good music as often as possible,
... let them study occasionally the works of a single great master
until they have received some of his teaching, and know his style.”*

—Charlotte Mason

With **Music Study with the Masters** you have everything you need to teach music appreciation successfully. Just a few minutes once a week and the simple guidance in this book will influence and enrich your children more than you can imagine.

In this book you will find

- Step-by-step instructions for doing music study with the included audio recordings.
- Listen and Learn ideas that will add to your understanding of the music.
- A Day in the Life biography of the composer that the whole family will enjoy.
- An additional longer biography for older students to read on their own.
- Extra recommended books, DVDs, and CDs that you can use to learn more about the composer and his works.

Simply
Charlotte Mason

Claude Debussy
(1862–1918)

by Rebekah Carlson

Excerpts from Charlotte Mason's Original Home Schooling Series are surrounded by quotation marks and accompanied by a reference to which book in the series they came from.

Vol. 1: Home Education

Vol. 2: Parents and Children

Vol. 3: School Education

Vol. 4: Ourselves

Vol. 5: Formation of Character

Vol. 6: A Philosophy of Education

Music Study with the Masters: Claude Debussy

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Charlotte Mason on Music Study

Let the young people hear good music as often as possible, and that *under instruction*. It is a pity we like our music, as our pictures and our poetry, mixed, so that there are few opportunities of going through, as a listener, a course of the works of a single composer. But this is to be aimed at for the young people; let them study occasionally the works of a single great master until they have received some of his teaching, and know his style. (*Formation of Character*, p. 235)

How to Use Music Study with the Masters

1. Play the music recordings often and mention the composer's name when you do. You can play them as background music during a meal, while running errands in the car, at nap time or bedtime, or while the students work on some handwork. (Try not to keep them playing all day or during noisy times when other sounds or conversation would distract.) Encourage the students to describe what the various pieces make them think of, to “draw the music” with art, or to move to the music. Allow them to form their own relations with it.
2. Read the A Day in the Life biography to the students and ask them to narrate. Enter this composer in your Book of Centuries. You can assign the The Story of Claude Debussy expanded biography to older students for independent reading during the weeks you linger with this composer. Other For Further Study resources are listed if you would like to learn more.
3. Once every week or so, give focused listening to a particular piece. Use the Listen and Learn ideas in the back of this book to guide your listening and discussion.

As opportunity presents itself, go to a concert that features the music of this composer so the students can listen to a live performance.

A Day in the Life of Debussy

By Rebekah Carlson

June 22, 1889

Sunlight streamed through the open apartment window, and a little bird warbled enthusiastically as it perched on the sill. Across the rooftops of Paris, a soprano voice traveled up and down scales, and the grocer down the street shouted at the delivery driver, who had just backed his cart right into the store's tidy flowerbed. Claude Debussy took in the sounds of a waking city and opened one bleary eye to survey his bedroom. Several days' worth of clothes littered the floor, and his coffee cup from last night was stacked on top of piles of manuscript paper on his desk. The young man stretched, yawning loudly as he rolled out of bed. From downstairs came his mother's piercing voice:

"Claude, what are you *doing*, still in bed at this hour? Your breakfast is cold, so don't blame me. I'm not a servant, you know! Maybe if you had a real job, *I* would have a servant, *oui?*"

Claude sighed as he grabbed some crumpled clothes from the floor. He packed up a bag with pencils, lined paper, and a book of poetry, and walked downstairs. Sure enough, a cold, congealed egg and the end of a stale baguette sat on his plate, next to a lukewarm cup of coffee. No matter. He bypassed the unappetizing breakfast, quickly grabbed his coat and hat, and tiptoed to the front door. He glanced in the apartment's hall mirror as he passed; dark, heavily lidded eyes squinted in the morning light, and his bushy beard. . . well, maybe he would find enough money to get to the barber next week for a trim. The door squeaked, and he heard his mother rustling in the salon. Before she could scold him further, her 26-year-old son was out the door and down the street, jauntily whistling a tune and nodding to passersby.

The Story of Claude Debussy

By Rebekah Carlson

Author's Note

Claude Debussy (pronounced “deb-you-see” [equal emphasis on each syllable]) was one of the most brilliant and influential composers in the Western Canon. Sadly, he was also notorious for his amoral lifestyle; while this biography is accurate, details inappropriate for children have been omitted. Parents are strongly cautioned to preview any poetry noted in this book, as most of it contains adult content. There is mention of his wife’s attempted suicide on page 34 that parents might want to preview before reading aloud. While his personal life was messy, Debussy’s life and music are well worth our time; he was a fascinating historical figure who encountered many culturally significant people and places, and his compositions had a tremendous impact on music development at the dawn of the 20th century.

Part 1—“It would be desirable for him to be on guard against that vague impressionism which is one of the most dangerous enemies of truth in works of art.”

Every so often, a composer comes along who has an idea so new, so radical, so different from what came before, that it changes the course of music history. Imagine for a moment that we are in possession of a time-travel machine (wouldn’t that be extraordinary, by the way?). We could set the dial for around A.D. 1030 and visit Guido d’Arezzo, a monk who decided that music should be written down and not just taught by ear. He persisted despite the protestations of the choirmasters (who thought writing notes would put them out of a job), and thus musical notation was born. Thanks to Guido, we know what Gregorian Chant sounded like! Or we could set our dial for 1803 and experience the premiere of Ludwig van Beethoven’s

Listen and Learn

Prélude à l'Après-midi d'un faune (Prelude to the Afternoon of a Faun)

Have you ever woken from a nap feeling a little groggy? Maybe you wonder how long you've been dozing, or you don't remember right away where you are? Imagine for a moment that you've fallen asleep in a wood. A light breeze plays across your face, and your eyes flutter open, taking in the dappled sunlight streaming through the trees overhead. A sudden movement out of the corner of your eye causes you to sit up and peer into the forest. You see a figure slip through the trees, its hooves dancing lightly over the moss, and you wonder—are you still dreaming, or is this real?

Debussy was fascinated with the poetry of Stéphane Mallarmé (1842–1898), an influential French Symbolist poet in the late 19th century. Mallarmé was interested in the power of suggestion and wove vague and dream-like images into his works. *L'Après-midi d'un faune*, Mallarmé's poem about a faun waking to see nymphs dancing in the forest, captured Debussy's imagination, and in 1894, Debussy's orchestral work, *Prélude à l'Après-midi d'un faune*, would cement him as a modernist composer. Though most of the poem is not appropriate for children or teens, the excerpt below is an excellent example of

Debussy's music reflecting Mallarmé's poetry. Read the lines below as you listen to the opening measures:

No water, but that which my flute pours, murmurs
To the grove sprinkled with melodies: and the sole breeze
Out of the twin pipes, quick to breathe
Before it scatters the sound in an arid rain,
Is unstirred by any wrinkle of the horizon,
The visible breath, artificial and serene,
Of inspiration returning to heights unseen.

Translated by A. S. Kline

Debussy's *Prélude* begins with a wandering solo flute line, which lands in a pillow of sound provided by winds, french horn, strings, and a shimmering harp. It is hard to discern a key or firm pulse; through his dream-like music, Debussy reflected the vagueness in the poem. This was an entirely new sound for an orchestral work, and it caused quite a stir in Paris at its premiere in 1894. The piece, which is performed frequently today, enraged the traditionalist Parisian composers, who lamented that Debussy had broken too many rules of composition in his lush, wandering score.

As you listen to this piece, perhaps you can imagine a story that would fit this music. Listen for the clarinet (at 3:15), which introduces a new color and has a back-and-forth conversation with the flute. What might they be saying to each other? Perhaps you will be inspired to create a poem, story, or drawing inspired by Debussy's beautiful, dream-like piece.

Music Study with the Masters: Debussy

Complete Track Listing

All music courtesy of Naxos of America, Inc.

Disc 1

Estampes, L. 100 (13:47)

Performed by Akihiro Sakiya

1. No. 1. Pagodes (4:58)
2. No. 2. La soirée dans Grenade (Evening in Granada) (4:53)
3. No. 3. Jardins sous la pluie (Gardens in the Rain) (3:56)

String Quartet in G Minor, Op. 10 (25:07)

Performed by Kodaly Quartet

4. I: Animé et très décidé (6:13)
5. II: Assez vif et bien rythme (3:50)
6. III: Andantino, doucement expressif (7:57)
7. IV: Très modéré (7:07)

La Mer, L. 109 (25:12)

Performed by Cologne Radio Symphony Orchestra with Gary Bertini

8. No. 1. De l'aube à midi sur la mer (9:54)
9. No. 2. Jeux de vagues (6:40)
10. No. 3. Dialogue du vent et de la mer (8:38)

Disc 2

1. Prélude à l'Après-midi d'un faune (10:00)

Performed by Cologne Radio Symphony Orchestra with Gary Bertini

2. Suite bergamasque: Clair de lune (5:13)

Performed by Francois-Joel Thiollier

3. Cinq Poèmes de Baudelaire, L. 64: No. 4. Recueillement (5:03)

Performed by Claire Booth and Andrew Matthews-Owen

4. Pelléas et Mélisande, Act 1, Scene 1: *Une forêt* (12:54)

Performed by Armand Arapian, Gabriel Bacquier, Mireille Delunsch,
Jean-Jacques Doumene, Francoise Golfier, Helene Jossoud, Gerard

Theruel, Pas-de-Calais North Regional Choir, Lille National
Orchestra, and Jean-Claude Casadesus

Deux Arabesques, L. 66

Performed by Francois-Joel Thiollier

5. Arabesque No. 1 (5:07)
6. Arabesque No. 2 (3:37)

Children's Corner, L. 113 (18:15)

Performed by Paavali Jumppanen

7. I: Doctor Gradus ad Parnassum (2:20)
8. II: Jimbo's Lullaby (3:53)
9. III: Serenade for the Doll (2:41)
10. IV: The Snow is Dancing (2:51)
11. V: The Little Shepherd (3:29)
12. VI: Golliwogg's Cakewalk (3:01)

13. Images Book 1: No. 1 Reflets dans l'eau (Reflections in the
Water) (5:18)
Performed by Francois-Joel Thiollier
14. Images Book 2: No. 3. Poissons d'or (Goldfish) (3:54)
Performed by Francois-Joel Thiollier