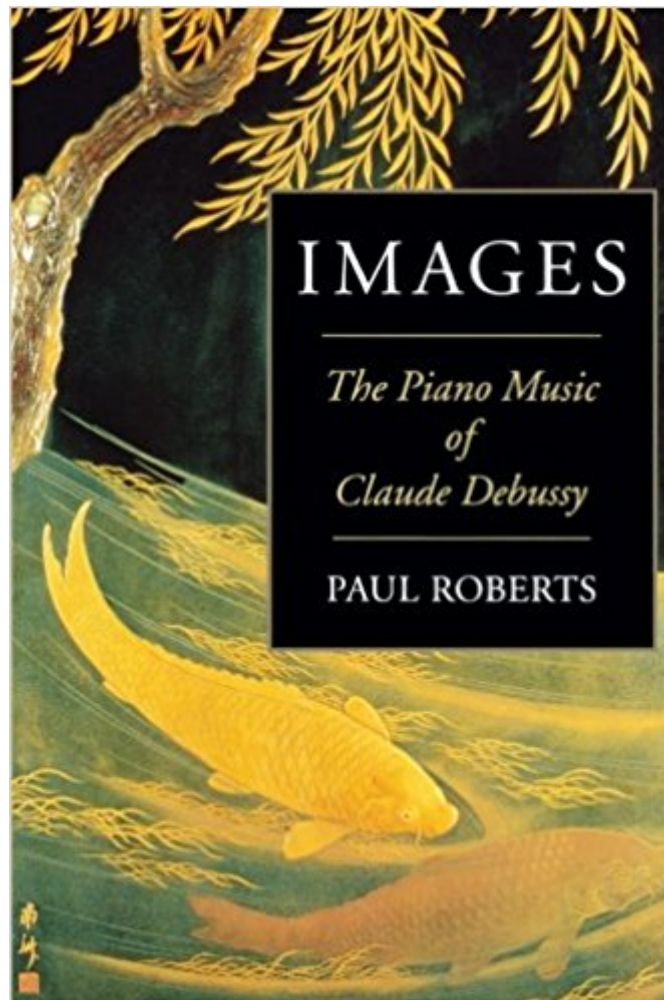




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Images: The Piano Music Of Claude Debussy



Synopsis

Paris at the turn of the 20th century was obsessed with the interrelations of the arts. It was a time when artists and writers spoke of poetry as music, sounds as colors, and paintings as symphonies. The music of Claude Debussy, with its unique textures and dazzling colors, was the perfect counterpart to the bold new styles of painting in France. Paul Roberts probes the sources of Debussy's artistic inspiration, relating the "impressionist" titles to the artistic and literary ferment of the time. He also draws on his own performing experience to touch on all the principal technical problems for a performer of Debussy's piano music. His many suggestions about interpreting the music will be particularly valuable to performers as well as listeners.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

In the poems of Baudelaire and Verlaine and the paintings of Watteau, which influenced his early compositions, Debussy sought truth and beauty as emanations of realism. Later, his music turned to symbolism, as, among other things, his daughter motivated him to compose music inspired by the sprites and fairies of Arthur Rackham's illustrations for Peter Pan in Kensington Gardens and Ondine. Also, the experience of the Javanese gamelan led Debussy to explore, not the percussiveness and the counterpoint predominant in that traditional Indonesian music, but the "after tones" (resonance, overtones) of the piano. Besides examining those influences on Debussy, British pianist Roberts discusses technique for interpreting Debussy's music, giving performance tips for the 24 Preludes, the 3 études, and the pieces concerned with childhood and humor. Judicious use

of the piano pedals, Roberts reminds, brings out the overtones and after tones that Debussy heard while composing. Advanced amateur pianists and sophisticated listeners will find this beautifully illustrated book very useful for understanding Debussy's piano music. Alan Hirsch --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

An invaluable book for pianists and enthusiasts of French music in general. -- Classical Music, Feb. 16, 2002
One of the chief delights of this book is that it is so engagingly well-written. -- Ted Libbey, The Washington Post Book World
Readers will savor the insider's view. -- Piano & Keyboard

Although this book goes into great detail concerning the social and artistic circles in which Debussy lived, I found the E Robert Schmitz volume to be often of more practical use for the pianist looking for advice on performance. However, Mr. Robert's book dovetails nicely in terms of function with Schmitz, and is a welcome addition to my library.

This is one of the best books on Debussy's piano music that I've found. I have a doctorate in piano and have several books on Debussy but this is one of the best.

Fine

I would be able to write a more erudite review of this book if I had my copy beside me, citing examples of wonderful writing, interesting anecdotes and illuminating images. Unfortunately, I loaned it to my piano teacher, and she won't give it back! She has fallen in love with it. I think I may have to give her a copy as a gift if I ever want to see my copy again. Paul Roberts was here in Portland last June for the first Piano Festival Northwest. He gave a lecture, a master class and a piano recital. His abilities in all three areas are distilled into this book. He has studied Debussy and the cultural "stew" of Paris during Debussy's life. He has studied Debussy's piano works and performs them sensitively. And finally he can explain all of this in a most entertaining manner, in person and in his writing. The book is not easy to read in a summertime-beachy way, but it is certainly not academic or pedantic. It is lively but thorough, engaging and thought provoking. It also contains many examples and musical excerpts which can be studied with a view toward performance of the pieces. As an amateur pianist, I can appreciate these sections without being able to perform the works, and my teacher takes the examples as points of departure or new interpretive ideas for works which she has performed in the past, but can now see in new ways. Of

course, if you've never heard of Debussy, I suppose you might have no use for this book. Otherwise, buy it. (I have no connection, family or business, with Paul Roberts.)

Images: The Piano Music Of Claude Debussy Paul Roberts (professor of piano, Guildhall School of Music and Drama, London) is a meaningful, superbly presented, in-depth analysis of the French piano music of artist and visionary Claude Debussy. Chapters focus in depth upon Debussy's individual songs and go into minute, deconstructive and comparative analysis, observing common threads in Debussy's work and that of other masters such as Chopin. A scholarly book deftly written at the college-graduate level, Images is highly recommended as the perfect companion book for a true connoisseur of Debussy's music. Two music CD's of Debussy's work, performed by Images author Paul Roberts, are intended as companions to Images but are sold separately.

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