Prélude en Ré
Prelude in D♭
(1911)

Lili Boulanger
edited by Jamie Crofts (2012)
The life of Lili Boulanger is far too often reduced to the two facts of, first, her immense talent as both a pianist and composer and, secondly, of her untimely death at the age of just 24.

If we get beyond these mere factoids of her history we find a composer of a rich and beautiful music. To have shown such promise at an early age is one thing, but she also found an original, personal voice.

This *Prélude en Ré* \(\text{Prelude in D}\) flat, dated Sunday 12 March 1911, was written when the composer was 20. The current edition is based on a manuscript in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris (BNF ms. 19467). With no performance directions and an ambiguous ending it is likely that the piece is unfinished. To produce this SOUNDkiosk edition of the piece I began with the assumption that the composition of the piece is finished in terms of the raw material (notes and rhythms). The evidence for this is based purely on these few facts; that it is a fair copy, the last bar is completed with rests, it ends with a double bar line and the piece is signed and dated.

I am treating the piece as incomplete only in terms of missing performance directions. Other works by the composer were consulted in order to find something approaching authentic performance directions*. Other piano music by Lili Boulanger is rich with performance directions and dynamics to a point where I would say they are important to the success of her style and so it would be a fair assumption that they are missing from this piece.

Although I love the piece I have to concede that the composition seems awkward at times with its sudden changes of material. My objective was therefore to produce a workable composition through the addition of appropriate dynamics and expression marks.

The sudden changes of material need careful handling to make the piece work. These contrasts in content require subtle changes of tone, speed and emphasis. The thematic material passes from treble to bass needing individual hands to be played *en dehors*. With such careful handling it is possible to group the material into longer continuous phrases, thus holding the piece together.

Perhaps the most problematic aspect of the piece is the ending. It seems awkward and unfinished. But if we consider the first chord of bar 32 to be the natural end to the piece we can treat the following two bars as a fading out; the remaining chords become simply a series of harmonic enhancements of this final chord. To achieve this I’ve added a sudden change from *ff* to *mf* and immediately into a diminuendo to *ppp*. I also play the ending without any reduction in speed.

* The compositions consulted for this edition were a series of 3 pieces for piano published by Zen-On in 1990. They are *D’un Vieux Jardin*, *D’un Jardin Clair* and *Cortège* (which also exists in a version for violin or flute and piano). All three of these pieces fade into understated double or triple *p* at the end, thus adding a little weight to my decision to fade this prelude to *ppp*.

In addition to this I took a lead from Maurice Ravel: Bars 10 to 12 of Lili Boulanger’s prelude reminded me of one section (bars 10 to 15) of a short prelude by Ravel from 1913, written as a sight reading test for the Paris Conservatoire final piano competition.** I took the initial performance indication from this Ravel prelude as it seemed perfectly apposite.

** Prélude, Maurice Ravel, published 1994 Peters Edition No. 7372. The dedicatee of this prelude is Jeanne Leleu, herself a very talented composer and winner of the Prix de Rome in 1923 with her cantata *Beatrix*.

There are two versions of the piece: The first without, the second with performance directions all of which are mine.

Jamie Crofts, editor, 2012
This is a SOUNDkiosk digital edition. A print edition is available to order from SOUNDkiosk. SOUNDkiosk editions are high quality publications printed in pigment inks on high quality paper, often in A3 format to avoid frequent page turns.

This special edition is produced by Jamie Crofts and SOUNDkiosk under a Creative Commons licence. It must only be reproduced with title pages and preface and must only be distributed in its current form. No other editions based on this edition must be made without permission from Jamie Crofts jami@soundkiosk.com

CC BY-NC-ND 2012

This CC licence allows you to distribute and share this publication.
BY - Attribution must remain with the authors
NC - Any distribution must be non commercial
ND - No derivatives are allowed
Prélude en Ré♭

Lili Boulanger 1911
Prélude en Ré♭

Dimanche
12 Mars 1911

Lili Boulanger
Prélude en Ré♭

Lili Boulanger 1911
ed. Jamie Crofts 2012

Assez lent et très expressif

\( \frac{\text{\( \}}{\text{\( \}}} \) = 60 environ

Piano

un peu plus vite

au temps

m.d. en dehors

en dehors

un peu scherz.

CC BY-NC-ND 2012 Jamie Crofts / SOUNDkiosk
Prélude en Ré♭

Dimanche
12 Mars 1911

Lili Boulanger
SOUNDkiosk Piano Edition:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SKPE 01</th>
<th>Erik Satie Ogives (1st correct edition 2010)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SKPE 03</td>
<td>Erik Satie 7e Nocturne (3 versions completed from Satie’s notes by Robert Orledge, James Nye and Jamie Crofts) (1st Edition)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SKPE 07</td>
<td>Erik Satie/Robert Orledge La Mer est pleine d’eau (1st edition)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SKPE 08</td>
<td>Erik Satie/Robert Orledge Nocturne d’un sorcier de sous-sol (1st edition)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SKPE 09</td>
<td>Robert Orledge Nocturne (style of Erik Satie) 2002 (1st edition)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SKPE 10</td>
<td>Les Pantins Dansent (1st edition of first version, 1913)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SKPE 11</td>
<td>Claude Debussy Petite Valse (1915)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SKPE 14</td>
<td>Claude Debussy Toomai des éléphants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SKPE 12</td>
<td>Erik Satie/Jimmy Dove 3 Observations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SKPE 13</td>
<td>Erik Satie/Jimmy Dove 4 Goths</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Recitations with piano:

| SKPE 02 | Franz Liszt: The Monk in Sorrow |
| SKPE 04 | Felix Draeseke: The Monk of Bonifacio |
| SKPE 05 | Franz Liszt: Lenora |
| SKPE 06 | Josef B. Foerster: Amarus |

New editions with poetic prose translations by Jamie Crofts

Also available:
Selected works for piano by Michael Parsons and complete works for piano by Jamie Crofts.

For more information and to order online by credit or debit card visit www.soundkiosk.com
For a complete catalogue please email orders@soundkiosk.com

Prélude en Ré♭  Lili Boulanger