

Abstract

Achille-Claude Debussy(1862-1918), who had a great influence on modern French circles, was one of the most important French composers. He was one of the most influential figure in the founding of the Twentieth century modern music. His works represented revolution and integration, and consisted of a variety of voices from different countries and full of colorfulness. *Préludes Book I* is his most remarkable composition for piano, which relates to not only the literary movement as Symbolism, but also Impressionist paintings.

The thesis is divided into three parts: firstly, I will start with the study of the historical and cultural background in Debussy's time. After that I plan to take an overview of his life and studies in order to understand what personal and musical experiences helped form his style. Later, I will focus on a preliminary research and analysis of Debussy's compositions for piano, categorizing them into the early, middle and late periods, with a table to show a clearer presentation.

Secondly, I will be reviewing the history of preludes and this will lead my study to the historical background during the period when Debussy's *Préludes Book I*, was composed, which inevitably had an influence on how and why it was composed. Finally, the most important part of the thesis, I will aim at the analysis on the twelve pieces of *Préludes Book I*. After a careful and thorough study on the creative process of these pieces, I look forward to combining the most appropriate and adequate way with my personal style to play

Debussy's *Préludes Book I*, so that I am able to interpret it in the way that is the closest to Debussy's intention of creating *Préludes Book I*.

Keywords: Debussy, Symbolism, Impressionism, prelude, piano music

