

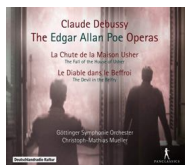
## Claude Debussy - The Edgar Allan Poe Operas (2016)

Written by bluesever

Friday, 14 December 2018 15:05 -

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La Chute de la Maison Usher after the short story "The Fall of the House of Usher" 1

*Prélude* 1:14

Scène 1

*2 Dans la plus verte... Lady Madeline* 2:49 *3 Qui êtes-vous?... Le Médecin, L'ami* 1:56 *4 Cet homme est le dernier... Le Médecin, L'ami* 1:50 *5 Et sa soeur... L'ami, Le Médecin* 2:52 *6 Ah! Pourquoi ne veut elle pas... Le Médecin, L'ami* 0:36

Scène 2

*7 Madeline... Roderick* 2:37 *8 Vieilles pierres... Roderick* 3:32 *9 Ah! J'ai soif de vivre... Roderick* 2:34 *10 Serait-ce toi... Roderick* 2:46 *11 Ne vous effrayez pas... Le Médecin, L'ami, Roderick* 1:44 *12 Des flambeaux... Roderick, L'ami* 3:19 *13 Voyons, Roderick... L'ami, Roderick* 2:14 *14 Les vieilles pierres étincelaient... Roderick, L'ami* 4:13 *15 Roderick! Roderick!... L'ami, Roderick, Le Médecin* 5:05 *16 Laissez-moi vous donner un conseil... Le Médecin, L'ami* 1:39 *17 Dans la plus verte de nos vallées... Roderick, L'ami* 2:42 *18 Je sais qu'elle est trop frêle... Roderick, L'ami* 1:17 *19 Tenez, j'ai trouvé cet antique... Roderick, L'ami* 2:02 *20 Mais craignant la tempête... L'ami, Roderick* 1:35 *21 Vous n'entendez pas?... Roderick* 1:21 *22 La voyez-vous?... Roderick* 1:47

Le Diable dans le Beffroi after the short story "The Devil in the Belfry" Premier Tableau

*1 Prélude* 0:41 *2 Ahem!... Bourgmestre* 1:19 *3 Savez-vous planter... Les Enfants* 1:18 *4 Valse des tulipes* 0:51 *5 Polka* 1:09 *6 Ah, Jeannette... Bourgmestre, Jeannette* 1:11 *7 Bonjour, monsieur le haut-sonneur... Bourgmestre, Haute-sonneur* 1:53 *8 C'est la grande tradition... Bourgmestre, Haute-sonneur* 1:31 *9 Bonjour Jeannette... Jean, Jeannette* 3:26 *10 Allez, il faut nous préparer... Haut-sonneur, Jean* 2:41 *11 Un... deux... trois... Les Villageois* 1:01 *12 Le Diable! C'est le Diable!... Haut-sonneur, Bourgmestre, Jean* 2:19 *13 Le Diable mime avec un solo violon de l'orchestre.* 1:58

Deuxième Tableau

*14 Interlude* 2:16 *15 Tarantelle* 1:01 *16 Ma tête tourne... Les Villageois, Haute-sonneur* 1:36 *17 La, la, la, la... Jeannette, Jean* 1:52 *18 Holà! Holà! Holà!... Les Villageois, Bourgmestre* 1:37 *19 Holà! Holà! Holà!... Les Villageois, Jean, Bourgmestre* 2:07 *20 Mon Dieu, sauve-nous... Jean* 1:55 *21 Un... deux... trois... Les Villageois* 0:39 *22 Savez-vous planter... Les Enfants* 2:23

La Chute de la Maison Usher (1910 rev. 1915/16) [51:56] William Dazeley (baritone) - Roderick Usher Eugene Villanueva (baritone) - A friend of Roderick Virgil Hartinger (tenor) - The Doctor Lin Lin Fan (soprano) - Lady Madeline Le Diable dans le Beffroi (1903) [36:56] Eugene Villanueva (baritone) - The Burgomaster Lin Lin Fan (soprano) - Jeannette Michael

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Dries (bass) - the Bell-ringer Virgil Hartinger (tenor) - Jean Kammerchor St. Jacobi Göttingen  
Göttinger Symphonie Orchester Christoph-Mathias Mueller - conductor

Claude Debussy is admired as a colour artist and alchemist of sound. Debussys opera *Pelléas et Mélisande* premièred in 1902 and is regarded as a very special masterpiece, albeit a solitary one. The composers relationship with opera however was not as distanced as one could suppose from focusing on this single work which is in fact not an isolated component within the artists oeuvre. Plans existed for further operatic projects and Debussy devoted himself intensely to two operas based on texts by Edgar Allen Poe during the last few years of his life which were dominated by ill health. He continued working on *La Chute de la Maison Usher* (The Fall of the House of Usher) until shortly before his death and was distraught at not being able to complete this composition. *Le Diable dans le Beffroi* (The Devil in the Belfry) has only survived in sketch form. The English musicologist Robert Orledge (\*1948), a renowned expert within the field of French music at the beginning of the twentieth century, reconstructed both operas with great sensitivity to Debussys compositional style, augmenting missing passages. Debussy had promised the New York Metropolitan Opera the premiere of the Poe operas, apparently still believing that he would still complete them both. The composer received contractual confirmation that both works would only be performed consecutively on the same evening, meaning that the gloomy melancholy of one work would serve as a counterweight to the mocking humour of the other. The operas in their complete form as reconstructed by Robert Orledge have never been heard within the context intended by the composer. The production featuring the Göttinger Symphonie Orchester is therefore a world première: according to Debussys wishes, the two operas would have been performed at the New York Metropolitan Opera in this exact juxtaposition. ---Editorial Reviews

The listener may be forgiven for not knowing that any Debussy "Edgar Allan Poe Operas" existed, for neither of the works recorded here was ever completed. Moreover, and you don't learn this unless you read the notes or have investigated for yourself, one of them was hardly begun. After the success of *Pelléas et Mélisande* in New York, Debussy was encouraged to adapt a pair of Poe's short stories for a new American production. Debussy needed little encouragement and quickly produced a pair of scenarios, but other projects intervened, and the operas were never finished. The more complete one is *La chute de la maison Usher* (The Fall of the House of Usher), for which there are substantial sketches and several full realizations including the one here by "creative musicologist" Robert Orledge. *Le diable dans le beffroi* is almost entirely Orledge's work, and he seems to have diverged substantially from what Debussy planned (he has solo voices where Debussy apparently intended a choral work). This

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puts the whole project here firmly in the speculative realm, especially inasmuch as the operas seem to have been planned as a kind of pair, with *Le diable dans le beffroi* as the comic counterpart to the familiar moody tale of the House of Usher. But the music, especially in the Usher work (the patchwork of parody and quotation Orledge puts together for *Le diable* makes the question of whether it's Debussyan less relevant), sounds like Debussy, and although the graphics credit only the Göttinger Symphonie Orchester under Christoph-Matias Mueller, there are some fine solo singers here, most of all William Dazeley as Roderick Usher. Sample the climactic final tracks of this opera for the effect. Those interested in how Debussy saw Poe, as manifested in his adaptations, will be pleased to find complete texts in English, French, and German in the booklet (Debussy worked from Baudelaire's translations). Recommended for Debussy buffs. ---James Manheim, AllMusic Review

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