



DEBUSSY & CHOPIN

ICONIC PIANO WORKS TRANSCRIBED FOR HARP

arranged by
KATHERINE SIOCHI

Gold Medalist of the 10th USA International Harp Competition



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Ballade

Claude Debussy

2.

Trois Nocturnes

Opus 9 No. 1

Frédéric Chopin

12.

Trois Nocturnes

Opus 9 No. 2

Frédéric Chopin

18.

Études

Opus 25 No. 1

“Aeolian Harp”

Frédéric Chopin

22.

FOREWORD

My enthusiasm for these transcriptions goes back to my childhood. My background in music began when I started taking piano lessons at age 5, and while growing up, my family was always listening to classical music. In particular, I was very fond of Debussy and Chopin's piano music. I would listen to these albums over and over, and especially loved a Claudio Arrau recording of Chopin's complete nocturnes. Since childhood, I was captured by the beauty of these nocturnes; I loved how something so simple could be so emotionally profound at the same time. The *Op. 9 Nocturnes* are neither flashy nor dramatic. They are understated, with a gorgeous, singing melody in the right hand and simple, repetitive arpeggios or chords in the left hand. Chopin's use of harmony is stunning— in critical moments he colors the key with an unexpected parallel major or minor, giving the music a bittersweet quality. Debussy, similarly, enchanted me with his enigmatic harmonies and the gorgeous colors of his sound world. The *Ballade* is one of his earlier piano compositions, and it lends itself effortlessly to the harp with its flowing arpeggios. In fact, this piece sounds as if Debussy composed it for the harp.

I was actually first given the idea to transcribe the *Nocturne Op. 9 No. 1* by one of my theory professors at Juilliard, who suggested it would sound beautiful on the harp. He was right, and I developed a deep love for this piece on the harp, performing it as often as possible. This inspired me to create other transcriptions, including the *Nocturne Op. 9 No. 2* and the *Etude Op. 25 No. 1*. My teacher, Nancy Allen, suggested the “Aeolian Harp” Etude, which seemed like an obvious choice from its name. The constant, arpeggiated figures suit the harp perfectly and continue unrelentingly throughout the entire etude, but the piece is anything but monotonous. Using this basic idea, Chopin creates drama with his harmonies driving towards a passionate climax, and then recedes into ethereal tranquility at the end. At the risk of sounding cliché, this piece is truly heavenly on the harp.

My goal in these transcriptions was to remain as faithful as possible to the original piano scores, making only minor note changes when absolutely necessary for pedal facility. Some of the chromatic passages in the nocturnes require very quick pedal changes but are completely achievable with practice and do not sacrifice the notes from the original. I have re-written many passages with enharmonic respellings that allow for easier pedaling, more comfortable hand positions, and a better sound on the harp. I have chosen fingerings that allow for the greatest facility and clarity in difficult passages. As a general rule for every piece, I suggest approaching any moving bass notes with a flat, open hand (whether the 4th finger or thumb). The piano's natural mechanism mutes the sound once a key is played and released if the sustain pedal is not engaged. A harp string, however, will sound until the player muffles the string. On the harp, therefore, it is especially important to clarify changing harmonies whenever possible.

~Katherine Siochi
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Ballade

Claude Debussy
arranged by Katherine Siochi

Andantino con moto (Tempo rubato)

pp

rit.

Tempo

pp

sim.

cresc.

R.H. 2

1 2/4

3

6

1 2 3 4 1 2

2 3 1

2 3 4 1

2 1

1 2 3

4 3 2 1

4 2 1 3

2 1 2 3

5

G# B

G# B