

VERSET LAÏQUE & SOMPTUEUX

ERIK SATIE



ARCUEIL, SEINE, 5 AOUT 1900

PREFACE

In 1900, the year of the great Universal Exhibition (Exposition Universelle), Charles Malherbe, the chief librarian at the Paris Opera, decided to put together a special collection of composers' manuscripts to represent the French achievements of the time. For his invited contribution, Satie made his final foray into the world of the Église Métropolitaine d'Art de Jésus Conducteur, signing his *Verset laïque & somptueux* with his familiar red double cross of the 'Parcener et Maître de Chapelle' (and only member) on 5 August 1900. His manuscript facsimile duly appeared in the *Autographes de Musiciens Contemporaines* on p. 255 of Vol. 8, a copy of which can still be found in the Paris Opera Library (1900 - ♪ - XIV (255)).

Satie's detached little 'Verse', which is religious rather than belonging with the laity, and reflective and personal rather than 'sumptuous' (note the directions for the pianist and the absence of dynamics), was the only piece in the Rose+Croix style of the 1890s that Satie wrote in his new home at the Maison aux Quatre Cheminées in Arceuil. By 1900, he had moved on into the world of cabaret and popular songs, as well as seeking the greater rhythmic flexibility that can first be seen in his *Pièces froides* of 1897. So, for him, this was perhaps a nostalgic reminiscence of his earlier life in Montmartre, or a genuine attempt to remind the world of what he had achieved as regards finding his own individual style.

As the title shows, this little vignette is not without his habitual irony. At the slow speed that characterises all of Satie's music from the Metropolitan Church, the *Verset* combines modal beauty, sonorous chordal spacing, and harmonic unpredictability, and on this occasion it is succinctly unified by transpositions of the three falling chords heard at the start, as well as containing an element of personal lyricism.

Robert Orledge, 2010

Réfléchir

Musical score for the first system, featuring a treble and bass clef. The music is in G major and 4/4 time. The right hand plays a series of chords and single notes, while the left hand provides a bass line with chords and single notes. A large slur covers the first two measures of the right hand.

Autrement

Musical score for the second system, continuing the piece. It features a treble and bass clef. The right hand has a melodic line with some grace notes, and the left hand has a bass line with chords. A large slur covers the first two measures of the right hand.

Soi-même

Musical score for the third system, concluding the piece. It features a treble and bass clef. The right hand has a melodic line with grace notes, and the left hand has a bass line with chords. A large slur covers the first two measures of the right hand.

Verset Laique & Somptueux

Erik Satie

Arcueil, Seine, 5 Aout 1900



This is the online free edition of Satie's *Verset*. The published edition is available to buy from SOUNDkiosk. It is a bound folio edition printed on high quality Bockingford paper. It is a signed limited edition and is printed using pigment inks.

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Edited by Robert Orledge & Jamie Crofts
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