

JACQUES IBERT

Contents

Foreword	3
About This Edition	3
About the Composer	3
About the Music	4
Performance Suggestions	5
Suggested Reading	5
<i>Le vent dans les ruines</i>	6

In Memoriam
Maynard Roberts (1916–2008)

LE VENT DANS LES RUINES

Edited by Wesley Roberts

ABOUT THIS EDITION

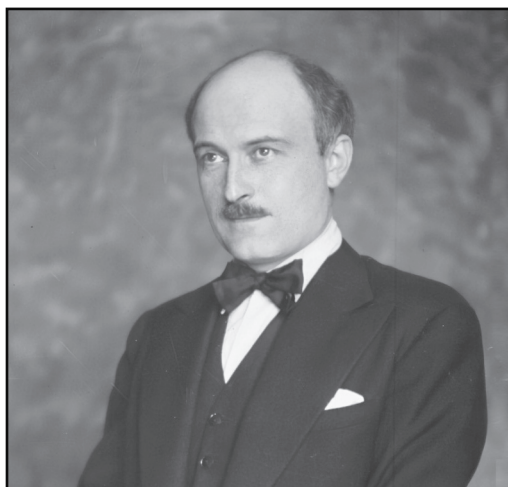
Foreword

This edition is based upon the edition published by Alphonse Leduc in 1932, itself a reissuing of the original publication by Augustin Gay in 1918. Ibert did not mark any fingerings in the score, and with the exception of a few pedalings near the end, simply indicated *Sempre ped.* at the beginning. The editor has added fingerings and pedaling to supplement those of the composer. In some cases, alternative fingerings may be used. In principle, pedaling should be abundant but without excess. The use of half-pedaling techniques is encouraged when the dynamics are *pp* or softer. The composer's pedal marks are indicated by traditional ped notation. All other pedal marks are editorial.

ABOUT THE COMPOSER

Jacques François Antoine Marie Ibert was born on August 15, 1890, in Paris, France. His father was an amateur violinist and his mother an accomplished pianist. As a child, he briefly studied violin and then piano, the latter for several years, and gradually developed a love for improvisation, a skill that enabled him to be a pianist for silent movies at the American Theater while a student at the Paris Conservatory in the early 1910s.

Ibert's studies at the Conservatory were with Émile Pessard (harmony), André Gedalge (counterpoint and fugue), and Paul Vidal (composition and orchestration). (Contrary to some publications, Ibert never studied with Gabriel Fauré.) Rejected twice for military service at the beginning of World War I due to health concerns, Ibert joined the Red Cross and served as a stretcher bearer and medical orderly, preparing soldiers for emergency surgery, including the administration of anesthesia. At the end of the war, he competed in and won the famed Prix de Rome composition competition on October 11, 1919. The following day, he married his childhood sweetheart, the sculptor Marie-Rose ("Rosette") Veber.



Jacques Ibert

The three years spent in Rome at the French Academy as a Prix de Rome recipient were among the happiest and most relaxed years of Ibert's life. Among the works he composed and/or completed during this period were his two most famous: *Escapes* for orchestra and *Histoires* for piano. The following 14 years were spent in Paris struggling to earn a living while composing and helping his father in the latter's import/export business.

In 1937, Ibert was selected as director of the French Academy. He became the first musician to serve in this capacity. His new duties required significant periods of travel and work at the Academy, which gradually limited his time for composition. Among the most representative compositions from this extended period are film scores and works for the stage.

During the 1955–56 artistic season, Ibert served additionally as administrator of the Opéra and Opéra-Comique in Paris while maintaining his position in Rome. The two positions proved to be too much, and he was forced to retire from the opera for health reasons. Following retirement from the French Academy in 1960, he returned to his home in Paris, where he died on February 5, 1962.

Ibert's compositional style centered around Neoclassicism, although his early works show an eclectic approach with influences from late 19th-century Romanticism, Impressionism, and even Expressionism, while several later works contain touches of jazz. He loved all the arts and had been especially fond of drama as a teenager, a factor that undoubtedly led to the dramatic quality found in many of his works. The influence of Emmanuel Chabrier and Maurice Ravel is among the most apparent, but others can be identified for specific works. His ability to create pictorial scenes through music was remarkable, as was his wit and humor.

ABOUT THE MUSIC

Although Ibert composed a number of lighthearted works in his teens, it wasn't until he entered the Conservatory that he began to compose seriously. Several works for piano appeared during these years of formal training and subsequently during World War I. His interest was primarily in the character piece, undoubtedly inspired by Chabrier and to some degree by Erik Satie and Claude Debussy.

The effects of World War I became a major inspiration for musical ideas. Initially sent by the Red Cross to Amiens, France, Ibert was transferred on October 2, 1915, to Vitry-le-François, a small town along the Marne River in Champagne, where he was assigned close to the front lines. It was in this location that Ibert composed "Le vent dans les ruines" (The Wind in the Ruins), completing it no later than December, when he delivered the score to Augustin Gay.

The inspiration for the work occurred from the image of a building in ruins, probably that of Reims Cathedral, which had been virtually demolished by German bombs in September 1914 and would later suffer even more bombings. Ibert's brief musical essay became an avenue not only to explore programmatic character but also different stylistic qualities. Biographer Gérard Michel called it "an odd combination of Debussy's Impressionism, Ravel's clarity, Roussel's ruggedness, and Liszt's Romanticism," characteristics that foreshadowed the eclectic spirit readily developing in the young composer.¹

"Le vent dans les ruines" was published three years after its composition in 1918. Its first performance was probably on March 30, 1919, by a Ms. Prudent. Gay had agreed to publish a set of three "Compositions pour piano" by Ibert, and "Le vent dans les ruines" was the first to be issued (the others being "Pièce romantique" and "Matin sur l'eau"). When Gay's firm later went out of business, Ibert's publications were transferred to Alphonse Leduc. Several compositions first published by Gay were reprinted by Leduc. "Le vent" was initially dedicated to *Mme Georges Paul Boucour*; however, the dedication was not retained in the Leduc edition.

"Le vent dans les ruines" is three minutes in duration.

¹ Gérard Michel, "Liner Notes" from *Jacques Ibert: L'Œuvre pour piano*, Françoise Gobet (piano), Metropole 2599 016, 1979, 33 1/3 rpm.

PERFORMANCE SUGGESTIONS

The virtuosic nature of “Le vent dans les ruines” is prominent throughout much of the work. Ibert’s instruction to use pedaling is essential to achieve his desired effect of wind blowing through ruins. Broken octaves, descending in the right hand and ascending in the left, are featured from beginning to end to suggest a strong wind-like effect. Performers will note that the melodic notes in mm. 1–26 and 53–68 should be played semi-legato so the accentuation is not compromised. The *Stringendo molto* in mm. 69–73 is the height of the storm, and one should not hold back in this tornado-like octave passage.

A fully legato touch is needed in mm. 78–91 as the wind temporarily abates. Gentle legato fingering for the chords in mm. 95–98, 105–109, and 116–120 should apply to all voices, as the Impressionist technique of planing is employed in strong contrast to the dashing phrases of 16th notes. Precise pedaling is required to avoid chordal overlap. The sostenuto pedal will be helpful for the sustained low F’s that begin at the end of m. 76.

Critical to successful performances is the pianist’s perception of drama. Pictorial scenes appear throughout Ibert’s complete œuvre, and “Le vent” is no exception. It is a character piece with a programmatic theme waiting to be unveiled to its audiences. A sensitive use of dynamics will enhance the expressiveness, and performers are encouraged to shape each phrase with a sense of form. Ibert instructs the performer to use both hands (*a due mani*) for the final three measures in its downward slope. Listen carefully for the octave slurs.

SUGGESTED READING

Michel, Gérard. *Jacques Ibert*. Paris: Editions Seghers, 1967. In French.

———. *Ibert*. Translated by María de la Paz Díaz González. Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, 1981. In Spanish.

Roberts, Wesley. “Jacques Ibert’s Piano Music.” *Clavier* 29 (November 1990): 15–19. Reprinted in Dutch: “Een Verkenning van de Pianowerken van Jacques Ibert.” Translated by Laetitia van Wayenburg. *Piano Bulletin* (1990–3): 3–13.

Le vent dans les ruines

(The Wind in the Ruins)

Jacques Ibert
(1890–1962)

Agitato assai (♩ = 152)

pp e misterioso
sempre Ped.
poco
simile
½ pedal u.c.

3

poco

6

poco mf
t.c.

9

cresc.

13

f
senza rall.
p
8va⁻¹