The Impressionist Impact: How Claude Debussy Influenced Non-Western Composers and Music

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The Impressionist Impact: How Claude Debussy Influenced Non-Western Composers and Music

By

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Abstract

Achille-Claude Debussy (1862-1918) was a French composer and a pioneer in Impressionist music and experimented with an original system of harmony that would shape music for the rest of the 20th century. His work would go on to impact the compositional style of two other composers, Toru Takemitsu (1930-1996), a Japanese composer, and Herbie Hancock (1940-), a jazz performer and composer. Throughout this project, you will see the influence that Debussy had on these other composers through a multimedia experience with scores and recordings. Debussy’s use of chromaticism and modal melodies are big contributors to the music of Takemitsu and Hancock. Throughout this project, there are examples from Debussy’s Sonata for Flute, Viola, and Harp, Debussy’s La Mer, Takemitsu’s And then I was ‘twas Wind, and Hancock’s Maiden Voyage.
Acknowledgments

I am dedicating my work to Courtney Love, who would have loved to read about Debussy and would have been front row to all of my performances. I would also like to thank my family for supporting me through this journey and helping me get to this point in my education. Without their unconditional love and support, I would not be where I am today. Lastly, I would like to thank my professors, specifically Dr. Sydney Carlson, Mari Schay, Pat Vandehey, and Tristan Weitkamp. You have helped me grow as a musician, student, teacher, and person and I am blessed to have such a supportive team and I am excited to continue my teaching journey.
The Impressionist Impact

At the turn of the twentieth century, the Romantic musical era was coming to an end which gave room for a new era to begin, the Impressionist movement, and one of the pioneers of this era was French composer Claude Debussy. Though he did not like calling his work impressionist, his compositions would share the same characteristics as other impressionist composers like Maurice Ravel. Debussy's work would go on to impact generations of musicians after him, not just what we know as “Western music” but non-western composers and genres. Many of the great composers of the twentieth century name Debussy as one of their muses. Here, I have compiled similarities that two non-western composers share with Debussy and how the impressionist movement impacted their music. I have taken a look at two predecessors of Claude Debussy; one from Japan and one from the jazz genre and I have compiled examples of Debussy’s touch in their compositions. To fully understand the influence of Debussy, I encourage you to listen to all of the examples of the works, which I have included below. Throughout this project, you will see examples of the score and where these characteristics can be found and I hope that through the score and audio, you can hear the impact that the impressionist composer had on these non-western composers and genres.
Recording and Performers

Claude Debussy’s *Sonata for Flute, Viola, and Harp* (1962)

[Link to recording]
Performed by: The Melos Ensemble
Featuring: Osian Ellis- harp

Claude Debussy’s *La Mer* (2017)

[Link to recording]
Performed by: The Cleveland Orchestra
Conducted by Pierre Boulez

Toru Takemitsu’s *And then I knew twas wind* (2020)

[Link to recording]
Performed by:
Robert Aitken-Flute
Steven Dann- viola
Erica Goodman- harp

Herbie Hancock’s *Maiden Voyage* (1965):

[Link to recording]
Performed by:
Herbie Hancock- piano
Freddie Hubbard- trumpet
George Coleman- tenor saxophone
Rone Carter- bass
Tony Williams- drums
Achille-Claude Debussy was born on the 22nd of August 1862 in the small town of Saint-Germain-en-Laye, Seine-et-Oise, France. He was the son of a local shopkeep and seamstress and was the eldest of five children. From a young age, Debussy was fleeing from wars, like the Franco-Prussian War. While taking refuge with his aunt, he took his first piano lesson with Jean Cerutti. He showed exceptional musical abilities and entered the Paris Conservatory at the age of 10 where he would stay for the next 11 years. He studied under Antoine François Marmontel for piano, Albert Lavignac for solfège, Composition with Ernest Guiraud, harmony with Émile Durand, and organ with César Franck. By 1884, Debussy had won France’s most prestigious musical achievement, the Prix de Rome with his composition *L’enfant Prodigue* (The Prodigal Child). With this award, Debussy got the opportunity to study at the French Academy in Rome where he would stay from 1885-1887 (Predota). After his time in Rome, Debussy returned to Paris where he would hear some of Wagner’s works like Tristan und Isolde which he was very fond of, to the point that what we comment at Wagner was “a beautiful sunset that was mistaken for a dawn”.

One of the most influential events for Debussy would be his attendance at the 1889 World's Fair in Paris where he heard Javanese gamelan music (Figure One) for the first time where he heard exploration of melodies, rhythms, and ensemble textures. He also attended some performances of Rimsky-Korsakov’s music conducted by the composer himself. His first successful premieres were *Prelude to the Afternoon of a Faun* and *Pelleas et Melisande* which led him to establish himself as a leading composer of French music (Predota).
Debussy’s compositional techniques were heavily influenced by these non-western performances and would ultimately influence how he would compose. He added more harmonic freedom to his music and non-conventional tone colors which untimely create the musical style impressionism. Characteristics of this style are pentatonicism (the use of the five-note scale), modality (the use of scales from ancient Greece and the medieval church), parallelism (the parallel movement of chords and lines), and the whole tone scale (a scale made up of all whole intervals). These techniques can be seen in the opening line of his symphonic poem for orchestra *Prélude à l’après-midi d’un faune* (Prelude to the Afternoon of a Faun) which is a carefully orchestrated line that uses chromaticism and has the first and last pitch of the line create a tritone (figure two) within the melody. This interval is heard as dissonant and previous composers found this chord placement unnatural.
Through Debussy’s unique compositional techniques, a new style of music comes out of Woodwork, called Impressionism. Though Debussy didn’t like to use this term, he was the leading composer of the movement alongside Joseph Maurice Ravel. The idea of this musical movement was to capture a singular moment in time showing the tranquil moments in the world. The musical movement happened alongside the impressionist art movement of the same name. These artistic eras both had the same intention of what they wanted to capture and were both pioneered by French composers and artists. Painter Claude Monet was at the forefront of the movement and captured these intimate moments in time and nature through examples like his 1871 painting titled “Houses on the Achterzaan” (Figure Three) which was inspired by a trip that Claude Monet took to Zaandam, Netherlands. While capturing this moment, Claude Monet wrote of his friend Camille Pissarro, “This is a superb place for painting. There are the most amusing things everywhere: hundreds of windmills and enchanting boats, extremely friendly Dutchmen…”

Figure Three: Claude Monet’s “Houses on the Achterzaan”

During his final years, Debussy was fighting a battle with colon cancer after being diagnosed in 1915. He went through intense surgeries and radiation, causing him to become
weak and depressed. In his diary on 8 June 1916 he wrote “Since Claude Debussy is no longer writing music, he has no excuse for being alive. I have no hobbies; I was never taught anything but music. Things are endurable only on condition that I can compose, but to keep tapping a brain that sounds hollow is an unpleasant business.” During these home-ridden years, Debussy began to compose more than he had previously, many being etudes and sonatas. His last completed composition was his *Sonata for Violin and Piano in G minor*, written in 1917. Debussy died on the 25th of March 1918 during an invasion of Paris at the peak of World War I. Because of the war, there was no public funeral or ceremony for the composer and he was buried in a temporary grave in Paris and would be later moved to a permanent gravesite in Paris, where he could live out his final wish of being “among the trees and birds”.

*Sonata for Flute, Viola, and Harp*

Debussy began composing *Sonata for Flute, Viola, and Harp* in September 1915 and completed it in October of that year. After this composition, Debussy was informed that his cancer was very advanced. The instrumentation of the sonata is written for flute, viola, and harp which was rare at this time but would become an extremely important chamber work for all three instruments. The original instrumentation was for flute viola and oboe but he revisited this in the final version. During the time Debussy was writing this and his other two sonatas while World War I was in full swing and he was terminally ill (Lai). Through this, we can see that the interpretation of this composition evokes a feeling of despair and loss, which can be seen in the Pastorale movement with the descriptor words used like “lento, dolce rubato” meaning slowly,
expressive and rhythmic freedom, melancoliquement (meaning melancholy and sad) (figure four). Even the meaning of the movement [Pastorale] is used to describe a slow instrumental composition in compound time. The beginning introduces each voice seamlessly with one another at a piano volume. The tempo marking changes to “Animando”, requesting the musicians to be animated through this movement but the voices are still quiet, alluding to the fact that the music will grow into something more. At tempo marking “tempo animando” (figure five), Debussy creates this echo effect with the flute part repeating this melodic line that was previously played by the viola which is immediately followed by a unison line between the musicians creating an effect like something just “clicked”. At rehearsal marking 2 (figure six), the musicians are asked to alter their sound again with words like “otez la sourdine” (mute the viola strings), “Vif et joyeux” (play lively and cheerful), and “nettement rythme” (play with a distinct rhythm). Some of these terms are used in all three voices but “otez la sourdine” is primarily used in the viola part. Towards the middle of the Pastorale movement (figure seven), Debussy changes the timbre of the piece by switching the melody lines between the instruments. The flute line is doing something similar to before but the harp and viola lines change by adding the unison melodic line to the harp and the harmonic flourishes to the viola part.

Figure four: Debussy’s Sonata for Flute, Viola, and Harp
Figure Five: Debussy’s Sonata for Flute, Viola, and Harp

Figure Six: Debussy’s Sonata for Flute, Viola, and Harp

Figure seven: Sonate for flute, viola, and harp

As shown in Figure eight, Debussy seamlessly connects the slow and melodic lines between the viola and flute while the harp goes through beautiful runs through this beautiful four-note pattern. The harp part uses this four-note pattern to modulate through the rest of the
Interlude section. At rehearsal marking 15 (figure nine), Debussy includes his signature tritones throughout the melody in the flute and viola lines.

Looking ahead to the final movement of this composition which starts with a feeling of instability and tension in the music. This is done through fast interval changes in the harp while they perform dramatic dynamics (figure ten). The harp play starts with an accented note at forte with the 5th jump while the dynamics soften. This same pattern starts again with each measure given a ripple effect. By rehearsal number 16 (figure eleven) each instrument is doing something different with elements that contradict each other like the pizzicato of the viola, the slurred melody in the flute, and the accented slurred line in the harp. This effect ebbs and flows
throughout the rest of this movement until rehearsal number 23 (figure twelve) where a recapitulation of the first movement appears. Debussy writes in the score “Mouvt de la Pastorale” so the musicians can see this similarity. This is not an exact rendition and this pattern does change as the recapitulation occurs but the overall shape of the lines stays the same.

Figure ten: Debussy’s Sonata for Flute, Viola, and Harp

Figure eleven: Debussy’s Sonata for Flute, Viola, and Harp
La Mer

“My old friend, the sea; it is always endless and beautiful. It is really the thing in nature which best puts you in your place”  - Claude Debussy

La Mer, trois esquisses symphoniques pour orchestre (The Sea, three symphonic sketches for orchestra), also known as La Mer, is a composition for orchestra that was published in Paris, France in 1905 and is known as one of Debussy’s most admired and popular orchestral works. Debussy has mentioned time and time again his passion for the sea, stating that at one point, he wanted to become a sailor. For the title page of the score, Debussy personally decided to use Japanese artist Katsushika Hokusai’s woodblock painting. The Great Wave Off Kanagawa (1831) (figure thirteen). This symphony is scored for flute, piccolo, oboe, english horn, clarinet, bassoon, contrabassoon, french horn, trumpet, cornet, trombone, tuba, timpani, bass drum, cymbals, triangle, tam-tam, glockenspiel, harp, and strings. This composition is scored for more than the conventional orchestra with two harps and a large percussion section. This composition includes three movements; De l’aube à midi sur la mer (from dawn to noon on the sea), Jeux de vagues (play of the waves), and Dialogue du vent et de la mer (Dialogue of the wind and sea). As stated in the official title, Debussy referred to this composition as three symphonic sketches and
rejected using the term symphony. Even though in the present day, *La Mer* is deemed one of Debussy’s most notable works, it was not well received at its 1905 premiere in Paris with French music critic Pierre Lalo writing “I do not hear, I do not see, I do not smell the sea.” Another critic wrote, “The audience seemed rather disappointed: they expected the ocean, something big, something colossal, but they were served instead with some agitated water in a saucer (from Parisian critic Louis Schneider).”

At the beginning of this composition, there is a slow introduction that has accelerandos and crescendos with the arrival alluding to the sunrise (figure fourteen). The rest of the composition doesn’t look like a typical symphony with an exposition, development, and recapitulation but it is continuous like that rocks back and forth through the orchestra mimicking waves. Many lines are made up of pentatonic scales, which is a characteristic trait in East Asian music. The second scherzo-like movement is in the same through-composed form as the first but has a more playful and mischievous character which is heard throughout the woodwind section at
the beginning. At measure 16, the meter and tempo change with the descriptor as Animé (meaning animated) and we see this through the quiet pass-offs between the sections. The final movement is supposed to represent a stormy sea with a timpani roll and these low six-note runs in the cellos and contrabasses. The line (figure fifteen) has dynamic shaping that mimics the waves rocking back and forth and increasingly gets louder like a big storm is building up. In measure 44 (figure sixteen), a trumpet solo begins and adds a feeling of relief to this eerie setting which is a nod to the line “the calm before the storm”. After this momentum builds up until the last 13 measures of the movement where Debussy builds up the volume and intensity to the climax of the piece where the ensemble is playing fff (meaning extremely loud) followed by a trill between the wind players and strings (figure seventeen). The composition ends with an abrupt stop and a ‘thud’ like noise made by the strings and timpani, creating an echo from the last crash of the last wave of the storm. Throughout this 35-minute symphony, Debussy takes the audience on a vivid experience of the sea with all of its calm and chaos.

Figure fourteen: Excerpt from Claude Debussy’s La Mer
Figure fifteen: Debussy’s *La Mer*

Figure sixteen: Debussy’s *La Mer*
Life of Toru Takemitsu

Toru Takemitsu was a Japanese composer (8 October 1930- 20 February 1996) who is known for the subtle manipulation of instrumental and orchestral timbre. Takemitsu is known as the leading 20th-century Japanese composer and one of the founding members of the Jikken Kobo (Experimental Workshop) in Japan, a group of avant-garde artists from various disciplines that was founded after the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Until its disbandment in 1957, the group included 14 different members with different artistic/performing backgrounds like artists, musicians, printmakers, lighting designers, engineers, and more. Takemitsu was born in Tokyo and was in a traditional learning environment until 1944 when he started his journey in the military service, where he described his experience as “extremely bitter” during his time in the service, he had his first introduction to Western classical music, starting with the French folk song “Parlez-moi d’amour” (French for Tell Me about Love).

After World War II, he worked for the U.S. Armed Forces until he was hospitalized, but he took this opportunity to listen to as much Western music as he could. Takemitsu grew very close to Western music to the point where he distanced himself from traditional Japanese music. He would later explain that this was because traditional Japanese music “always recalled the bitter memories of war”. Through this experience, Takemitsu dived deep into Western classical music with his main influences becoming Claude Debussy and John Cage.

By 16, Takemitsu began to compose, despite his lack of musical training. He briefly studied with Japanese composer Yasuji Kiyose in 1948 but Takemitsu is primarily known as a self-taught composer. At this time, Takemitsu began to get more involved with the idea of electronic music technology, which he described as “bringing[ing] noise into tempered musical
tones inside a busy small tube”. Through these years, Takemitsu founded the anti-academic group Jikken Kobo (experimental workshop” which was a multidisciplinary collaboration on mixed-media projects whose goal was to avoid Japanese artistic tradition. During this time he composed pieces like Saegirarenia Kyusoku I (Uninterrupted Rest I) (1952), Statique (1955), and Vocalism AI (1956) (Tate). By this point, Takemitsu started gaining international attention when Igor Stravinsky heard his Requiem for Strings in 1958. This experience allowed him to be heavily influenced by Stravinsky himself and other composers like Aaron Copland and John Cage. Through this process, Takemitsu began studying all types of traditional Japanese music, paying special attention to the differences between the musical traditions. As a result of this, Takemitsu began to make use of traditional Japanese instruments including the biwa.

By the end of his life, Takemitsu commented that “There is no doubt… the various countries and cultures of the world have begun a journey toward the geographic and historic unity of all peoples… The old and new exist within me with equal weight”. It was said that Takemitsu was in the process of composing an opera but this was paused because of his diagnosis in mid-1995. His last completed composition is Air for solo flute, published in 1995. The composer passed while undergoing treatment for cancer in January 1996.

And then I knew ‘twas wind

This composition was composed in 1992 for Aurele Nicolet, a well-respected, Swiss flutist. The name for this composition comes from a poem of the same name by American poet Emily Dickinson. This piece is a sister work to Takemitsu’s piece How Slow the Wind for Orchestra (1991). Takemitsu took that melodic idea from the orchestra and used it in his trio.
Like Rain it sounded till it curved
And then I knew 'twas Wind
It walked as wet as any Wave
But swept as dry as sand
When it had pushed itself away
To some remotest plain
A coming as of Hosts was heard
It filled the Wells, it pleases the Pools
It warbled in the Road
It pulled the spigot from the Hills
And let the Floods abroad
It loosened acres, lifted seas
The sites of Centers stirred
Then like Elijah rode away
Upon a Wheel of Cloud.
How slow the Wind
How slow the sea
How late their Feathers be!

Figure eighteen: Poem from Emily Dickinson

Takemitsu’s two main influences for this composition are Debussy himself and nature. Takemitsu referred to Claude Debussy as his “great mentor”, stating that Debussy’s greatest contribution was his unique orchestration which emphasized color, light, and shadow… the orchestration of Debussy has many musical focuses. *And then I knew ‘twas wind* not only uses the same unique instrumentation as Debussy’s *Sonata for flute, viola, and harp* but Takemitsu directly quotes the Sonata’s rising lines in the viola part. Takemitsu wrote that the work “has as
its subject the signs of the wind in the natural world and the soul, or unconscious mind (or we could even call it ‘dream’), which continues to blow, like the wind, invisibly, through human consciousness.” This composition has a feeling of a continuous flow, like a stream or wind which gives the audience a meditative feeling through the unique color of Takemitsu. When asked about the inspiration behind using Dickinson's poem, he stated that it draws an analogy between the wind and the soul or unconscious mind. He wants to show how the wind is invisible but can be detected by the motion it causes in the visible world and that it will continue to blow like the wind invisibly through human consciousness. Takemitsu tries to dissolve feelings of measures or beats with constantly changing time signatures and tempos. A unique compositional idea that Takemitsu includes is playing techniques to get a specific effect. One is asking the harp player to hold a pedal down while plucking. This effect allows a pitch to be lowered to almost a whole step which gives a Japanese-sounding glide. Looking at rehearsal B (figure nineteen) we see the harp playing a similar line that we see in Debussy’s sonata. In the score, Takemitsu writes the note: “Quoted from Debussy’s “Sonate pour flûte, alto et harp”. Throughout this piece, we get many tempo and meter changes which are Takemitsu’s way of trying to eliminate strict time and give a flowing atmosphere like Debussy. But at this point, we see the same echoing pattern (figure twenty) that Debussy included between the flute and viola part with similar transitions between the two timbres. A unique aspect used throughout Takemitsu's piece is his use of extended techniques like two measures before Rehearsal C (figure twenty) where he asks the flute playing to flutter tongue through their melodic passage. To give a sense of eeriness, Takemitsu also makes “unconventional” interval choices (figure twenty-one) with an Augmented 5 and a diminished 4 in the flute melody. At rehearsal F (figure twenty-two) we see another motive that can be considered a Debussy influence. Here we have unison echos between the flute
and viola and glissandos off-centered with that melodic line. At the next rehearsal letter (figure twenty-three), Takemitsu writes a note to the three players asking that the harp maintains its tempo while the Flute and Viola play accelerandos and rallentandos freely. This effect creates the haphazard feeling that crazy gusts of wind create. Around rehearsal Q (figure twenty-four), we see how Takemitsu allowed for more freedom between the players with these ad-lib lines created. Only starting and ending notes are notation with a curved line in between indicating that the musician can create their flourish in that melodic line. For the last 12 bars of the piece, the musicians are instructed to continually play softer and slower. Takemitsu does this by including descriptors in the score (figure twenty-five) informing the musicians need to take into consideration that they are playing echos and to play the next notes as softly as possible. This effect is trying to mimic how the wind slowly and quietly stops.

Figure nineteen: Takemitsu’s *And then I knew ‘twas wind*
Figure twenty: Takemitsu’s *And then I knew ’twas wind*

Figure twenty-one: Takemitsu’s *And then I knew ’twas wind*

Figure twenty-two: Takemitsu’s *And then I knew ’twas wind*
Figure twenty-three: Takemitsu’s *And then I knew ‘twas wind*

Figure twenty-four: Takemitsu’s *And then I knew ‘twas wind*
Life of Herbie Hancock

Herbert Jeffrey Hancock (12 April 1940) is an American jazz pianist, bandleader, and composer. He was born in Chicago to a middle-class family and his musical career started as a classical pianist at the age of seven, where he is deemed a child prodigy when he played the first movement of Mozart’s Piano Concerto No. 26 in D Major, K. 537 (Coronation) with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra in 1952. Throughout his teenage years, he never had a jazz teacher and he spent his time listening and learning from the records of George Shearing, Erroll Garner, and Oscar Peterson. In 1960, Hancock heard Chris Anderson play and wanted to be his student. The same year he graduated from Grinnell College with a degree in electrical engineering and
music. Hancock moved back to Chicago where he began to take courses at Roosevelt University where he was awarded an honorary doctorate of fine arts degree in 1972.

Hancock came into the limelight when he joined Miles Davis’s Second Great Quintet, with Wayne Shorter on tenor saxophone, Ron Carter on bass, and Tony Williams on drums. This quintet would be regarded as one of the greatest jazz ensembles and at the same time, he began to record music under his own name and with other musicians. In 1969, Hancock started the gig of composing for the television special “Hey, Hey, Hey, Its Fat Albert " which can be where he became fascinated with the sound of electronic music. Hancock would spend the rest of the 20th and 21st centuries composing, recording, and performing music as a soloist and with different groups. As of now, he is still performing around the country and visits Universities frequently. He has won numerous awards from the Academy and Grammys including the award for best original score for Round Midnight in 1986.

Maiden Voyage

Maiden Voyage is a jazz composition featured in Herbie Hancock’s 1965 album of the same name which features Hancock’s quartet; Freddie Hubbard on trumpet, Ron Carter on bass, Tony Williams on drums, and George Coleman on saxophone. This is regarded as one of Hancock’s best-known compositions and has become a staple piece of jazz repertoire and one of the most influential albums of the era (Peters). This record is known as a concept album that aimed to capture the fluidity of the sea with five different compositions. The order of the tracks on the album goes; Maiden Voyage, The Eye of the Hurricane, Little One, Survival of the Fittest, and Dolphin Dance (MacDonald). Throughout the album, you hear sea motifs like the flow of the tides through ensemble swells, and ‘whole-tone’ swirls is a composition technique that alludes to
Debussy’s *La Mer*, though it is never specifically indicated that this record was influenced by Claude Debussy. Some of this influence isn’t seen in the score of the composition, but also in Hancock’s improvisation. This style would be imagined as ‘arabesque’ which are these flourishes to mimic wave sound effects. Through these techniques, Hancock creates this atmosphere through sound and color, a trait more commonly associated with the impressionist movement.

Looking at the core of this composition, we can identify that the key of Maiden Voyage is the mode of the D Dorian scale meaning that Hancock took the D major scale (usually spelled D-E-F#-G-A-B-C#) and lowering the third and seventh pitch by a half step (making the new spelling D-E-F-G-A-B-C) which creates different colors between chords. Modal music is a staple characteristic of Debussy’s music and can be found in Hancock's record. Both of these compositions share the same rocking motion throughout giving the impression of a boat rocking back and forth with the waves. For the melodic excerpts shown, I will be using a transcribed version of Hancock’s piano improvisation solos starting with the “B” section of the song where Hancock creates tension through rhythm. Looking at Figure twenty-six, we can see what Hancock was playing in each hand simultaneously with different accents which shows the hands moving on different beats eliminating a feeling of a meter which is similar to what Debussy did in *La Mer*. 
Another Debussy trait can be seen further into Hancock’s solo with the chromatic flourishes he does throughout (figure twenty-seven). This can be characterized by the “arabesque” like quality that the non-chord tones give the music. This same quality can be seen in not only Debussy’s work but many other musicians from the post-bop jazz era. These qualities are common throughout the genre but it is important to note that many of these jazz musicians like Herbie Hancock and Bill Evans were inspired by the impression music qualities of Debussy and Ravel and they brought those qualities into their jazz (Peters). In Figure twenty-eight we can see the melodic and rhythmic qualities described before working together to build up the peak of the improvisation solo.
Reflection of the Work of Debussy, Takemitsu, and Hancock

I have had a deep fascination with the impressionist era and Debussy’s Claire de Lune was the first classical song I played and felt empowered by every note on the page. Since performing that piece, I have been inspired to play other pieces by Debussy and by other composers during that era. I find it remarkable that composers like Debussy and Ravel were able to capture such dynamic colors and sounds when the world seemed so dark. I knew from the start of this project, I wanted to dive into Debussy’s work, especially after finishing a performance on his alone flute composition Syrinx when talking with my advisor about what I was thinking she introduced me to Sonate for Flute, Viola, and Harp; a unique composition that had direct influences on other composers. Through this process is how I was introduced to both Toru Takematsu and Herbie Hancock, two non-western composers, and was blown away by the compositional creativity in their songs. As a classical musician, I have performed and studied music from dead, white, men, and through this process, I have been exposed to the wonderful music of black and Japanese artists. For you, I hope this process has opened up your ears and
mind to the music from the Impressionist movement and how artists like Claude Debussy made an impact globally.
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