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***East West Encounter:
A Striking Blend of Western and Non-Western Elements in
Selected Piano Works of Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven and Debussy***

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Abstract

In this presentation selected piano works by Beethoven, Haydn, Mozart and Debussy that demonstrate a blending of western elements and non-western inspirations from Hungarian-Gypsy, Turkish and Asian cultures are discussed, with excerpts performed. Specifically the works include Haydn's *Gypsy Rondo*, Mozart's *Rondo alla Turca* from his *Sonata in A Major* (K. 331), Beethoven's *Six Variations on an Original Theme* (Op. 76) and *Rondo a Capriccio* (Op. 129), and Debussy's *Pagodes* and *Images II*.

Like many of their contemporaries, Mozart and Beethoven were fascinated with Turkish culture and music of the time. Haydn and Beethoven were delighted by the Hungarian-Gypsy music they heard. Debussy was inspired by Japanese prints and the Javanese gamelan he heard at the 1889 and 1900 Exposition Universelle in Paris.

As a result these composers incorporated such exotic elements in their works, adding thrill, excitement and drama to their symphonies, operas and piano works. The effects of such contrast and inclusiveness were striking. A prime example is Beethoven's addition of Turkish elements to *Ode to Joy* in his *Ninth Symphony*, which powerfully and beautifully expresses his belief in universal love and brotherhood, as in an ideal world. This also sparked extensive research in exoticism, otherness/alterity, and transcultural relationship.

The presenter hopes that this project will help to show how the composers achieved this striking blend of western and non-western elements in their piano pieces, as well as the musical richness that results. Such projects would also help to promote further understanding and appreciation among our various cultures.