

## *Japanese Echoes*

### **Project:**

As a homage to Claude Debussy the six Japanese composers Takashi Fujii, Satoshi Minami, Asako Miyaki, Kumiko Omura, Takayuki Rai und Yasuko Yamaguchi each wrote a piece for clarinet and harp that is related to one of the preludes by Debussy.

These preludes are originally composed for piano solo and were transcribed for clarinet and harp by Duo Imaginare.

Why Debussy? Why a Japanese answer?

*"Music is the silence between the notes" - Claude Debussy*

Debussy was extremely fascinated by the Orient, especially Japan. During the two World Exhibitions of 1889 and 1900 in Paris, he had the possibility of experiencing East-Asian Arts first hand and consequently integrated several of the aesthetic elements into his own music. He shunned the bombastic, post-romantic (Teutonic) trends of the day, preferring a calm, sensual, spacious form. In Japan this sensibility for space, "ma" (間) is ubiquitous in Japanese artforms.

Tone-colour was very important to Debussy which is very evident by his use of an expansive range of timbres. relating to space or environment, though not influencing the structure. This is analogous to the shakuhachi honkyoko tradition where the focus is concentrated on the aesthetic of a single note. The sound is thereby more important than the structure.

*„More and more..... I am convinced that music, by its very nature, is not a thing one can force into strict and traditional form. It consists of colour and rhythmic time.“ - Claude Debussy*

Hints of music from the Far East, namely the Japanese pentatonic (sometimes modified), appear in many works of Debussy such as *Chansons de Bilitis* and *Le Martyre de Saint-Sébastien* as well as in several of the *Préludes* for piano.

The answer to these *Préludes* on behalf of Japanese composers is a form of musical *Haiku* or rather *Waka* (respondent poem). It presents the chosen *Prélude* in a new perspective and illustrates for the listener Debussy's relationship to Japanese culture. In return, Debussy's huge influence on Japanese composers becomes perceptible as source of inspiration for them.