

The Influence of Japanese Poetry in Spanish Piano Music: Benet Casablanca and Mercedes Zavala's Haikus

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Abstract : In the mid-twentieth century, Spanish composers started looking beyond the national folkloric tradition (adopted by Albéniz, Granados, and Falla) and Rodrigo's neoclassicism, and searched for other sources of inspiration. Japanese Haikus fascinated Spanish musicians, who found in their brevity and imagination a new avenue to develop their creativity. The goal of this research is to study how two renowned Spanish authors, Benet Casablanca and Mercedes Zavala, incorporated Haikus into their piano works. Based on Bruhn's methodology on text and instrumental music relations, and developing a score and text analysis complemented by interviews with both composers, this study has revealed three possible interactions between the Haikus and these composers' piano writing: inspiration, transmedialization, and mimesis. Findings also include specific technical gestures to support each of these approaches. Commonalities between their pieces and those by other non-Spanish composers such as Jonathan Harvey, John Cage, and Michael Berkeley have also been explored. According to the author's knowledge, this is the first study on the Japanese influence in Spanish piano music. Thus, it opens a new path for understanding musical exchanges between both countries as well as contemporary piano tools that support the interaction between text and music.

Keywords : Haiku, Spanish piano music, Benet Casablanca, Mercedes Zavala

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