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Gregorian Chants Meet Native American Flute

In the music world we have all heard the phrase "East Meets West," but never used to describe world-fusion music like that made by vocalist Annette Cantor. In this case the "East" represents Europe and the "West" is North America.

On her Songs to the Earth recording, Cantor forms a new cross-pollinated musical form using sounds that originated in different parts of the world a millennium ago -- Gregorian chants and cello from Europe juxtaposed against Native American flute and percussion from America. Cantor also mixes it up with some great wordless vocalizing too. And some of the chants were written by now-famous 12th Century church poetess Hildegard von Bingen.

Incorporating beautiful melodies, lots of improvisation among top-notch musicians, lengthy pieces to stretch out on, and music dedicated to Mother Earth, this CD invigorates the listener while simultaneously offering relaxation and healing.

I do not know whether anyone else ever thought of mixing Gregorian chants with American Indian wood flute playing. Probably not because on the surface it seems like a far-fetched idea. But hearing it you understand it actually does work. Patrick Shendo-Mirabal plays the flutes, and on one track he breaks into some Indian chanting which goes right along with the Gregorian stuff. It makes you realize the world is a smaller place than we sometimes think, and that there are many similarities among ancient cultures from a thousand years ago.