

Handout

## Explore Piano Teaching Pieces from Asia

Presenter by Po Sim Head, DMA, NCTM [posimhead@gmail.com](mailto:posimhead@gmail.com) [www.posimhead.com](http://www.posimhead.com)

All videos are on <https://www.youtube.com/@thescientificpianoteacher790>

**1. Chee-Hwa Tan** <https://chee-hwa.com>

Music can be purchased at: <https://pianosafari.com/chee-hwa-tan/>

### **Elementary levels:**

#### ***A Child's Garden of Verses***

- Set of 8 pieces based on poems by Robert Louis Stevenson.

##### ***My Shadow***

- Features:
  - The question-answer subject between the hands
  - Legato and staccato
  - *Echoing dynamics*

#### ***Through the Windowpane***

- Set of seven pieces based on poems by Robert Louis Stevenson.

##### ***Night (no.4) ... and Day (no.5)***

- Two pieces featuring different times of the days
- *Night*: D minor
- *...and Day*: F major
- Features:
  - Smooth phrasing between the hands
  - Use of pedals
  - Rubatos

### **Intermediate level:**

#### ***Once Upon a Journey***

- five early intermediate pieces
- includes a short performance guide and a few suggestions
- an activity page

#### ***A Place to Dream***

Features:



- alternation between a 4/4 and 5/4 meter.
- falling broken intervals on the right hand
- Requires good control of touch
- voicing in the hidden melody

Other publications by Chee-Hwa Tan:

Circus Sonatinas (3 movements)	Late Elementary
Windy Nights and Other Tales (3 pieces)	Intermediate
A Royal Birthday Celebration: Suite Baroque Style (8 pieces)	Intermediate

## 2. Composer: Naoko Ikeda

<https://www.willispianomusic.com/search/search.action?seriesfeature=&menuid=14333&ubsiteid=264&&searchtype=product&resultsperpage=60>

Her scores can be purchased at most online sheet music stores.

Both *Miyabi* and *The Graded Collection* are written for **Early Intermediate- intermediate levels**

*Miyabi*: a set of five pieces imitating the traditional Japanese styles and sounds.

### *Plum Blossoms*

- Early intermediate level
- A dance between red and white blossoms.

Students can learn:



- Running note patterns
- The waltzlike style



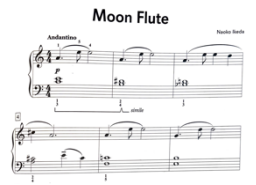
- A sudden change of meter

**The Graded Collection:** 24 of Ikeda's best solo piano pieces ranging from grade 2 (level 3 of Faber) to grade 5.

Grade 2: **Moon Flute**

Students can learn:

- The chromatic harmony (block chords and broken chords) on the left-hand
- Some contrapuntal phrases
- Change of mood and tempo



Grade 4: **...You**

- One of the composer's most popular pieces in Japan.
- Composed in the style of a 1980s pop ballad.

Students can learn:

- The syncopated rhythms
- The clear playing on the 16<sup>th</sup> notes



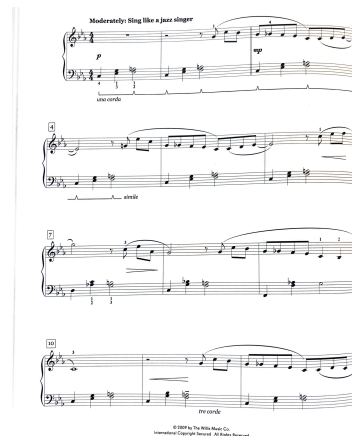
Grade 5: **Foggy Blues**

From Ikeda: "In a small jazz club hidden away in a basement, a woman on stage starts to quietly sing, accompanied by a soft piano. Outside, a deep fog sits, while footsteps on the stone pavement stop to listen to heartfelt blues."

Imitate the style of Gershwin and William Gillock.

Students can learn:

- Use of pedal
- The jazz style
- rubato



**Duets suitable for early-mid intermediate levels**

Duets in Color, Book 1 and Book 2: a set of 24 vibrant, elegant piano duets in major and minor keys.

### 3. Composer: Charisse Baldoria <https://www.cbaldoria.com/about>

- Philippine-born pianist, composer, and educator
- currently Associate Professor of Piano at Bloomsburg University of Pennsylvania
- Composition and improvisation

#### ***Boat Song:***

Improvisatory

- 3 minutes long
- **Intermediate level**

Students will learn:

- Finger pedaling
- Una corda/ tre corde
- Notes on higher registers
- the expressions

**Boat Song**  
for solo piano  
(2020)  
Charisse Baldoria

Moderato cantabile ♩ = ca. 52

*p cantabile*

*pp*  
*una corda*

*p cantabile*  
*tre corde*

### 4. Composer: Evelyn Chang <https://www.evelynchang.com>

- Taiwan-born pianist
- Currently resides in Hong Kong
- Steinway artist

#### ***Fantasies for Children***

Purchase here:

<https://www.universaledition.com/evelyn-chang-8058/works/fantasies-for-children-31572>

- 20 miniatures based on 20 different animals
- Music memos of playtimes between her and her sons.
- Suitable for **late intermediate to early advanced** players

## Jellyfish

Ocean in the eyes of Jellyfish. A colorful and magical place he calls home.

Features:

- Use of five flats- Db major
- Chopin-style writing
- rubato

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## Jellyfish 海蜇

The image shows a page of a musical score for the piece "Jellyfish" (海蜇). The score is written for piano and is in the key of D-flat major (five flats) and 3/4 time. It begins with the tempo marking "Andante cantabile" and a dynamic of "mp". The score is divided into systems, with measures 7, 14, 21, 27, 34, and 38 marked. The piece includes various performance instructions such as "a tempo", "a tempo tranquillo", and "rubato". The score concludes with the date "March 2017" in the bottom right corner.

# The Fantasy of Little C: Students' Repertoire from Hong Kong- A Melting Pot of the East and West

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## Hong Kong

- is currently known as the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China
- was established as a colony of the British Empire since 1841
- Hong Kong society reflects Chinese traditions, such as cultural values and festivals, while also adopting a Western democratic style of government.

## Composer: Julie Kuok Pun-Man

- Steinway artist active in performance, composition, and music education Hong Kong-born and based. Graduated from the Oberlin Conservatory of Music, Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts, and the Royal Academy of Music in London
- a faculty member at the Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts, the Chinese University of Hong Kong, and the Hong Kong Baptist University

## The Fantasy of Little C 小詩的奇幻旅程十首鋼琴小品

- composed in 2017
- a set of 10 pieces about the adventures of a little boy called Little C.
- Descriptive titles by using four-character idioms that start with one to ten
- a mix of contemporary Chinese and Western styles
- "Two Kids on Horseback" was selected as one of the set pieces in the 2019 Hong Kong Schools Music Festival
- suitable for students at intermediate to early advanced level

## Resources and links:

Playlist of the piece (played and introduced by Julie




Kuok): [https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLLCyLwNbHjrl0Hyxns8Lfw\\_wKm0U4lij](https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLLCyLwNbHjrl0Hyxns8Lfw_wKm0U4lij)





Purchase score: <https://juliekuok.com/product/the-fantasy-of-little-c/>

Interview with Julie Kuok:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7kWy33cJiT0&list=PLnOSveTUeoC5Gxt1juKm4Kv2fwXNA8sh2>

## Characteristics

<p>1. <i>Little C on His Way</i> 一意孤行</p> 	<p><i>Little C on His Way</i> uses notes C to represent the footsteps that Little C made during his journey.</p> <p><b>Students can learn:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Coordination between the two hands playing the same note at a fast pace.</li> <li>2. wrist and forearm movements to help bring the accents.</li> <li>3. the various rhythmic patterns</li> <li>4. extended techniques/ percussive sounds</li> </ol>
<p>2. <i>Two Kids on Horseback</i> 二童一馬</p> 	<p><i>Two Kids on Horseback</i> is a piece made up of a pentatonic scale with D as a center. It is the story of Little C riding horses with his friend, Little D.</p> <p>The fast ornaments are used to illustrate two kids riding a galloping horse.</p> <p><b>Students can learn:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. rotation techniques on playing the ornaments.</li> <li>2. the pentatonic scale</li> </ol>
<p>3. <i>In Two Words or Three</i> 三言兩語</p> 	<p><i>In Two Words or Three</i> describes Little C fainted after falling from the horse. He met Big G, an elderly man who was singing his own story.</p> <p><b>Students can learn:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. expressive playing through using rubato</li> <li>2. the use of pentatonic melody and the chromatic harmony</li> <li>3. contrapuntal writing</li> </ol>
<p>4. <i>Eyes on Eyes</i> 四目相望</p>	<p><i>Eyes on Eyes</i> is about Little C meeting a girl; her name is Little G-flat. This piece</p>

	<p>uses the key signature of G-flat major and pentatonic scale with G-flat as the center.</p> <p><b>Students can learn:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. the use of finger pedaling</li> <li>2. playing on the black-key areas.</li> <li>3. the contrapuntal writing.</li> </ol>
<p>5. <i>The Father, the Son, and the Five-character Quatrain</i> 五言長城</p> 	<p><i>The Father, the Son, and the Five-character Quatrain</i> is a conversation between Big G and Little C about writing a poem for Little G-flat. The five-note patterns represent the structure of Chinese poems.</p> <p><b>Students can learn:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. bring out the scattered fragments, like a brainstorming conversation.</li> <li>2. contrapuntal writing.</li> <li>3. use of fermata, ritardando, and the changing tempo.</li> </ol>
<p>6. <i>Huanted</i> 六神不安</p> <p>神秘地 Mysterious (♩ = 50)</p> 	<p><i>Huanted</i> is about Little C staying at a temple for a night, and he is scared of the mysterious atmosphere there. The repeated notes illustrate the unstable heartbeats of Little C.</p> <p><b>Students can learn:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. atonal writing</li> <li>2. playing the running notes quietly</li> <li>3. the running repeated notes with dynamic changes.</li> </ol>
<p>7. <i>Gabbling of the Spirits</i> 七嘴八舌</p> 	<p><i>Gabbling of the Spirits</i> is about Little C finding himself surrounded by strange creatures.</p> <p><b>Students can learn:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. the coordination between both hands.</li> <li>2. cross hand movement</li> <li>3. the crispy and even touch</li> <li>4. control of dynamics.</li> </ol>



8. *The Pride and the Pomp* 八面威風

Musical score for 'The Pride and the Pomp' in 4/4 time. It features a piano introduction with a melodic line in the right hand and a rhythmic accompaniment in the left hand. The score includes dynamic markings such as *mp* and *f*, and a section marked *ff* with a 'rit.' (ritardando) instruction.

*The Pride and the Pomp* describes Big G showing off his martial art technique to protect Little C. The heavy chordal writing is written to represent Big G's power.

Students can learn:

1. the changing time signatures.
2. playing the rich and heavy chords by using the arm and upper body

9. *Beyond the Clouds* 九霄雲外

Musical score for 'Beyond the Clouds' in 4/4 time. It is a three-staff piece. The top staff has a melodic line with a 'rit.' (ritardando) instruction. The middle and bottom staves provide accompaniment. Dynamic markings include *p*, *pp*, and *mf*. A 'with Ped.' (with pedal) instruction is present in the bottom staff.

*Beyond the Clouds* is about Big G turning into a statue of Guan Yu and Little C hears a voice from a Goddess, Nuwa.

Students can learn:

1. expressive and dreamy playing
2. use of three staves.
3. pedaling

10. *Finale* 十全十美

Musical score for 'Finale' in 4/4 time. It features a melodic line in the right hand and a rhythmic accompaniment in the left hand. The score includes dynamic markings such as *f* and *mf*.

In *Finale*, Little C wakes up and finds out everything was just a dream. The piece is made up of melodic fragments from the previous 9 pieces.

Students can learn:

1. the different styles and techniques from the previous pieces.
2. the dramatic shift of moods.