

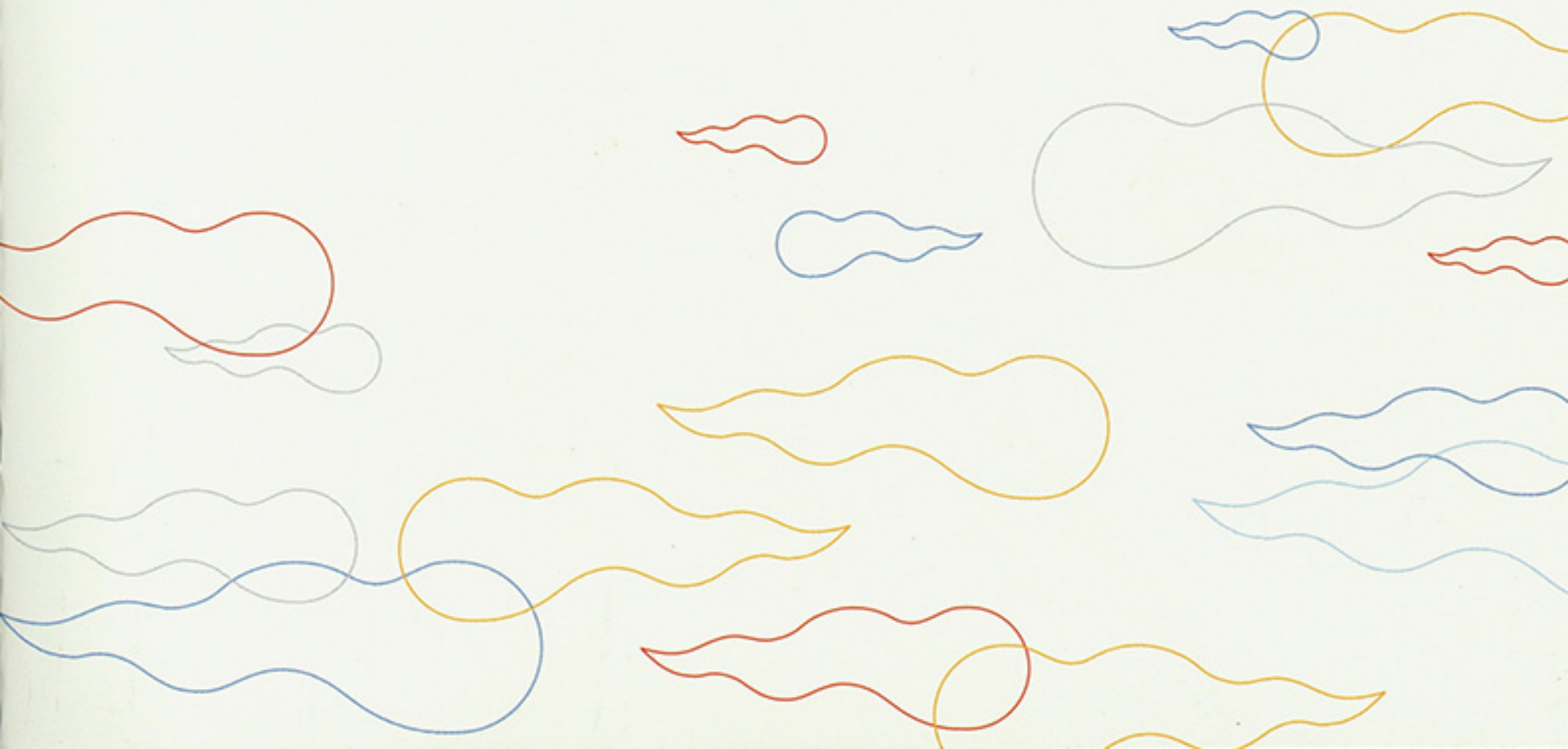


splendid adventures

KENNETH KUO, CELLO



Splendid Adventures / Desert Island
In the Wind, There is Longing
Enchanted Playground
Sky-Riding at 30,000 feet / Tropical Fascination
Those Bygone Days / Happy Following
In a Still Night / Lullaby / Shutling



01 Splendid Adventures 5:42
02 Desert Island 4:36
03 In the Wind, There is Longing 4:47
(greetings version)

04 Enchanted Playground 4:43
05 Sky-Riding at 30,000 feet 4:54

06 Tropical Fascination 6:14
07 Those Bygone Days 4:50

08 Happy Following 3:19
09 In a Still Night 6:18

(adapted from Chopin's Nocturne, Op.9, No.1)

10 Lullaby 4:34
11 Shuttling 3:12

Bonus Track

In the Wind, There is Longing 3:12
(breeze version)

Composed by Ed Yen (1-8, 11, Bonus Track) / Kenneth Kuo (10)

Arranged by Ed Yen (1-11, Bonus Track)

Adapted by Ed Yen and Kenneth Kuo (9)

Entering a world of gardens out of curiosity with trepidation, the covered trails and running streams seemed so intriguing. After much exploration and searching, the tired feet could no longer find the way back.

It was later learned that the mission of traveling in this garden until life's end has long been set. Since turning back became impossible, let courage and fantasy be the only guide and luggage on this journey into the unknown. Thus, a splendid adventure unfolds...

01 Splendid Adventures

Like a fledgling eagle finally ready to take off from the nest, a child protected by his parents' loving care is about to embark on his long journey. In the face of an unknown future, a splendid, unpredictable adventure story is just about to unfold. With anxious and excited emotions building up to a climax, the moment of first flight will soon arrive.

The guitar introduces the calm before the storm. Strings then rush in and push the musical thought into a broad exotic realm. Cello solo's courageous phrase plunges in over the accompanying strings, ready to take up the challenges in front. The middle section becomes a rollicking 6/8 beat imbued with underlying Spanish flavor, depicting arrival on the broad ocean. The ensuing section is inspired by the famous theme from the Czech composer B. Smetana, representing another adventure on the sea.

02 Desert Island

In the record collecting circle, the phrase <Desert Island> is often used to ask people if they were to drift to a deserted island and are allowed to carry only one record, which record would they choose? In fact, if this were to happen in the real world, one would worry about more than just which record to pick!

But that is not on a child's mind. What child does not dream of a world filled with fairies, exotic flora and fauna, where he could play all by himself, all day long? Especially when being disciplined by parents, or when being asked for homework by his teacher, he desires to go to this secret corner, to hide, to play, or to do whatever he wishes. Perhaps in a child's world, the desert island is peaceful, warm, welcoming, and free of adult complexities.

The solo cello is overdubbed to construct the whole harmony. This concept comes from the *a cappella* singing of church choirs. In a harmonious and serene mood, the different voices combine to form an otherworldly beauty. It also represents the intimate feeling of playing chamber music with a few good friends.

03 In the Wind, There is Longing (greetings version)

Busy? Too busy to care about faraway friends and families, even forgetting who they are? Perhaps many, many days later, a casual reminder comes by, riding on a breeze that brushes through the hair.... It is getting cold; the wind is up. All of a sudden, those distant ones are being thought of. Then the realization sets in: their longing is also in the wind.

The music attempts to depict the wind, or flying a kite on the river bank. Fly the kite as high and as far as possible! No need to worry about the string breaking, because it carries so many wistful thoughts. Just remember to hang some well-wishes on the tail of the kite for the beloved ones to receive.

04 Enchanted Playground

One child is lovely, two are joyful, but three may be disastrous!

Children are charming and troubling little beings. They are carefree, energetic, and yet can be fearless and troublesome. In their bright laughers, you can't help but recall your own childhood memories. Climbing up Mother's vanity desk to explore the cosmetics and music jewelry box; lying on the ground and refusing to walk away from the toy shop window; circling and begging mommy and daddy to go to the fairground....

With the accompaniment of the accordion, the listener enters into the fairground loved by a child. A somewhat sad mood meanders in the music like the frowning of a luckless clown. The triple beat on the drum sounds as if it came from the oscillating horses on a carousel. In the end, only the solo cello is left to play the glissandi high notes. Perhaps he still indulges in the reverie of riding on the roller coaster? Hush! Don't wake him up. One more minute spent in the wonderful memory is sixty more seconds in heaven!

05 Sky -Riding at 30,000 feet

Some people dare not fly because they feel insecure not planting their feet on the ground. Some people get excited about flying because it makes them feel liberated from the world. It is said that international flights have to maintain a cruising altitude of 30,000 feet or above. You cannot stop wondering if one can hear the angels sing so high above the clouds.

Although human beings have achieved the dream of flying, unfortunately they have to fly confined within an airtight space. The endless world outside of the window can't be touched, not even a whiff of cloud. Who has to deal with flying? Professional musicians must be on the list.

The whirling music commences with pampering comfort, floating above puffy clouds. Gradually, multi-layered chanting and beats join in, followed by a chorus of cellos coming through brilliantly like rays of sunlight shining through the clouds.

KENNETH KUO



CELLO

06 Tropical Fascination

Few people have never heard of the opera <Carman>. A French opera setting in Spain, it is a triangle love that ends in tragic bloodshed and death for the female protagonist with fiery passions. How intriguing is the love-hate-till-death spirit. Thanks to operas such as <Carman>, which traverses through daring emotions beyond common lives; yet as the curtain falls, all ends in serene darkness. And the palpating hearts in the real world have also briefly found their emotional outlet.

You may be mesmerized by the sound of the cello that perturbs your pulse, and sends an enticing tingle through your spine, gliding to the deep corner of your soul. Since you can't help but swing your body, why don't you waltz out your tango steps? Not yet! You have to break away from the boundaries of bar lines to avoid the suffocating stiffness. When your emotions begin to burn with intoxication, let go of the last strand of restraint!

07 Those Bygone Days

While fumbling through closets and chests looking for an item that is never to be found, it is not uncommon to instead stumble upon things from the bygone days -- childhood photos, torn diaries, drawings... they reappear like treasures. It's amazing how lost memories are well preserved by the rusty candy box. From the fading pictures of you holding the family dog, kindergarten class photo in bibs, and primitive writing practices, surface those pale, fragmented childhood memories. A lingering smile somehow begins to be mixed with regret for not keeping more of these old relics.

The music is trying to bring back the subdued feelings for the bygone days. Over the ticks and pops of an old record played on the phonograph, the solo cello calmly narrates the bits and pieces of yesteryears: the fragrant scent of flowers floating above the alley; the high-pitched calling from vendors down the lane; the frolicking laughs of kids off from school passing by. It looks as if your pet puppy, wagging its tail, is stumbling towards you again. Sentimental, reluctant, lost. Looking back at those bygone days is always bitter-sweet.

08 Happy Following

The inspirations in life often come from those familiar and unfamiliar people around you. Who is your guardian angel? Have you noticed the comforting warmth from caring friends next to you?

A boy from Asia was attending school in America for the first day. His heart was filled with anxiety and fear and he did not know what to do. After the seemingly endless first class, he was sitting awkwardly alone when the neighboring boy with blond hair approached him and said: "Follow me." It was this simple phase that opened his lonely heart and in his mind, everything started from this moment.

With a bassoon chord procession marching in with delightful rhythm, the music begins jauntily like a boy merrily prancing to school in the morning. A charming melody opens up like a blossoming daisy. After the snare drum joins in with an uplifting beat, the music develops more freely with a very noticeable light-heartedness.

09 In a Still Night (adapted from Chopin's Nocturne, Op.9, No.1)

A musician's life is spent roaming from one city to another. After descending from the stage, the lonely night is always around.

After a sleepless night, the evening brings another dilemma -- to sleep or stay up again? This lonely journey is left with only the warmth of the night. Where could the courage of facing tomorrow be found.... Was that sleep? Wasn't the piece already played, why return to the stage to play it again? Time is short, the darkness of the night is about to be chased away by the dim light of dawn. Perhaps for once indulge in letting the myriad of thoughts run free until they disappear into thin air. Or perhaps, take the next day off?

Chopin's Nocturnes must have been written in solitude at night. The notes on the score express his lonely thoughts. Someone must have scattered the notes to the stars. Otherwise, how can they be so glittery, and yet unfathomable? Without a sensitive heart, it is hard to collect such delicate feelings. Without slipping into a world between dream and reality, it is hard to perceive such soft, nocturnal sounds.

KENNETH KUO, CELLO

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10 Lullaby

Those habits formed gradually, without visible signs: caring concerns are ignored because they are said too many times; reminders are disregarded because the repetitiveness is irritating. The eagerness with which mother's voice is shunned, is but the eagerness to appear grown up. It might be hard to understand that, to a mother, a child is always a child. Maybe it has to be the moment you hum the first lullaby to your own child, that a mother's thoughts can be understood.

Like a breeze brushing by the face in spring time, the music is brought to a placid comfort zone. You can hear mother's hushed words and lulling serenade. The baby will then close his eyes, ride on the magic carpet to fly to the realm of dreams.

The beginning and closing music is extracted from an ancient lullaby tune of the Tsou people of Taiwan. The Tsou text can be translated into the following:
Go to sleep! My dear baby. Close your eyes; go to sleep now. My dear baby.

11 Shuttlng

Life is like an unusual adventure on the stage of the splendid world. You encounter new happenings, while old experiences surface at the same time. Notwithstanding the change of time and space, the old and the new are always intertwined. It is because today is the future of the past, and also the past of the future.

The music, like a Chinese poem, is succinct but profound. You do not sense the end when it becomes silent, meaning the future has no conclusions and the adventure must continue. Only with a tender heart can one shuttle between the past and future.

Bonus Track

In the Wind, There is Longing (breeze version)

This piece is again an overdubbing of solo cello as the music was originally conceptualized. Soft pizzicato rhythms represent waves of breezy wind, weaving together melodies from various voices. It has the warm, cozy feeling of recalling distant memories.

From the persistent passing of time, from the reluctance of dividing space, from the longing of distant friendship.... thoughts surge forward. There is more than one way of expressing it. Here you can savor another flavor of the musician's longings.

Kenneth Kuo, Cello

Hailed by the Sydney Morning Herald as a "cellist with great facility and confidence," Kenneth Kuo is rapidly establishing an international reputation as an important young artist. A San Francisco concert reviewer noted that Kuo is a "young cellist who is far ahead of the curve on his quest for a solo career."

Born in Taipei, Taiwan, he began his study of the cello at age four. In 1986 he continued his instruction in the United States, first with Ms. Marion Feldman at the Manhattan School of Music and then under the tutelage of Mr. Harvey Shapiro at The Juilliard School. In 1996 Kuo was awarded permanent residency by the U.S. government under the "extraordinary ability" category.

After receiving his bachelor's degree from Juilliard, he was awarded a full scholarship to Yale University School of Music to study with Mr. Aldo Parisot and serve as his teaching assistant. In May 1999, Kuo received his master degree from Yale and was awarded the coveted Aldo Parisot Prize in recognition of his stature as "a gifted cellist who shows promise for a concert career."

As a concert artist, Kuo has performed as guest soloist on the stages of major concert halls throughout Asia, Europe and the Americas. His fundraising concert at

Carnegie Recital Hall in New York for the victims of "September 21 earthquake of Taiwan" was featured in the String Magazine and was quoted "Kuo is an excellent Player, with an effortless technique, a beautiful, warm tone, and a unabashedly romantic soul."

Kuo is the Founder and President of The Connecticut School of Music in Westport Connecticut, Director of Classical Music Services, He is also an annual guest of the Ithaca Violoncello Institute where he gives master classes during the summer.

As a young artist in the field of classical music, Kuo is the model of many young adults due to his excellence in music and kind personality. He also spends a lot of time and energy in facilitating the music education of children of various ages. His faith is fully incarnated in his school.

Kuo not only teaches cello but also invites other great performers and teachers to participate in teaching and performing. His school provides the opportunity for students of all ages to enjoy classical music in the level of the finest institution as he believes that music education is not just for music majors.

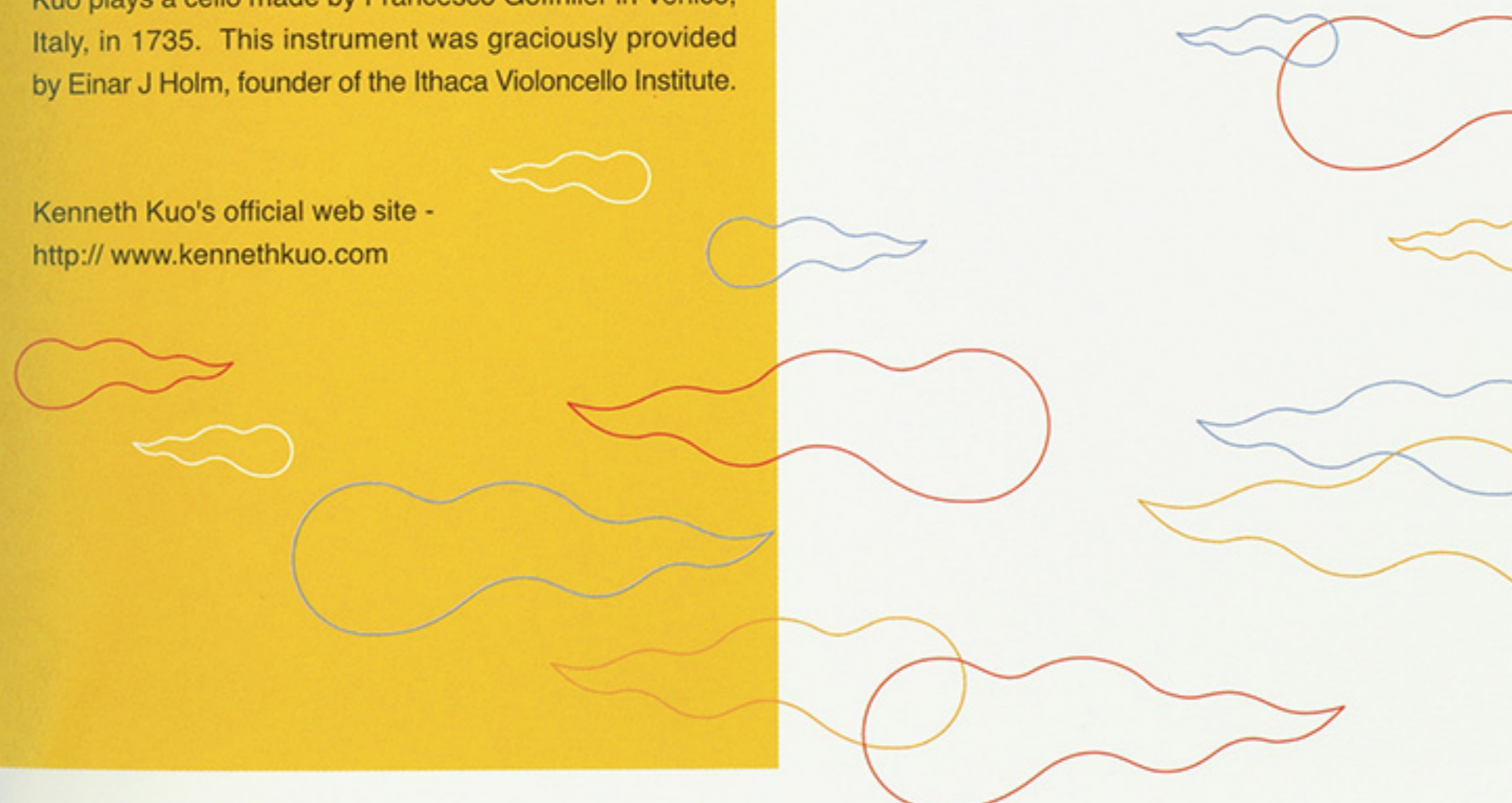
In September of 2002 Kuo and his faculty members was invited by the state of Connecticut to serve a great honor of performing for the September Eleventh living memorial of Connecticut addressed by governor John Rowland.

In the years Kuo has followed his passion of donating his time and his talent through out the world performing for charity and fund raising events of all kind. In 2001 Kuo established the Connecticut Musical Artists Foundation to raise money and create event for those who seek support in music of all fields.

In 2001 Kenneth recorded "The Memories of Boom-Mi-Pon" which was released by Jingo Records of Taiwan in dedication of his homeland and recollection of his childhood.

Kuo plays a cello made by Francesco Goffriller in Venice, Italy, in 1735. This instrument was graciously provided by Einar J Holm, founder of the Ithaca Violoncello Institute.

Kenneth Kuo's official web site -
[http:// www.kennethkuo.com](http://www.kennethkuo.com)



Postlude

This is an album about experiencing one's surroundings with childhood joy and imagination. Originally conceived to depict the experience of leaving home for a foreign country at the tender age of eleven, Kenneth Kuo achieved in expressing feelings common to many. There are extensions of abstract images, as well as memories of the past. At times it is just an expression of the wind. However, most of the time, the music is an expression of human emotions.

The cello is said to have the sound closest to human voice.

However, as the protagonist of an album, it presents challenges to the recording engineers. In order to bring a broader pallet of tone colors to the audience, several pieces have stretched the limit of the cello's range, which can be clearly heard. For this, Kuo jokingly said: "Shall I play these notes on a violin?" He understands our intent for this production and carries forward a different tone picture.

When first approached with the idea of playing the Chopin Nocturne, Kuo's eyes were wide open and he thought we must be dreaming or totally mad. He was right. It is not rare to find adaptations of Chopin's music in the world, however, few people are willing to alter this piece. It's so delicate that one is reluctant to touch it. At one point, we were about to give up on the idea. However, we are glad we did not, since it is really pretty.

<Desert Island> and <In the Wind, There is Longing> (breeze version) are played exclusively by the soloist. Each has at least ten parts, and took Kuo a lot of perseverance and time to complete. We are also glad to have Ms. Paitze Dyaghiana partaking in the recording, embellishing this album with her legendary voice from Alishan. Her contribution can be heard on two tracks: <Tropical Fascination> and <Lullaby>.

We tried to elucidate the music on this record with more words, in the hope of bringing forward more precisely the thinking behind the creations. Several tracks have direct links to Kuo, such as <Happy Following> and <Sky-Riding at 30,000 feet>. The former comes from his personal experience of the first day at school in America; while the latter is what surged into his mind when the plane he was flying back to Taiwan on ten years later was circling and preparing to land. The excitement also prompted the mixing in of the aboriginal children's chanting. <Lullaby> is a piece Kuo dedicates to his mother.

Perhaps the listener should read the text only as a reference, for the same piece of music may sound differently and bring up different stories according to one's own experience. This is what we wish to achieve with the production for this album.



Publisher: Steve Chen
Managing Director: Edward Chen
Executive Director: Dirk Chang
A & R: Eric Wang
Producer: Ed Yen
Female Vocal & Dubbing: Paitze Dyaghiana (Tsou Race) (6.10.)
Aboriginal Children Chorus: Zhi-Jie Huang (Atayal Race), Jia-An Xie, Ya-Yun Ji (Bunun Race) (5.)
Aboriginal Children Chorus Director: Mei-Ling Shou (5.)
Guitars: Jun-Yi Wu (3.7.10.) / Yu-Hong Yang (1.6.9.) / Ed Yen (4.)
Piano: Ed Yen (1.3.6.7.11.)
Flute: Ching-Min Lin (3.7.8.11.)
Bassoon: Yi-Fen Kuo (8.)
Accordion: Yan-Meng Wang (4.)
Harmonica: Ed Yen (3.)
Strings -
Violins: Qi Lee, Guo-Rong Lan (1.4.5.6.8.) / Chia-Chun Lu, Chi-Min Wu (3.7.9.10.11.)
Viola: Eric Wang (1.3.4.5.6.7.8.9.10.11.)
Cello: Kenneth Kuo (1.5.7.11.)
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