

## 2023 FCC Webinar: Composers of Asian Heritage

Curated by Chee-Hwa Tan

### Yoshinao Nakada (1923 – 2000) - Japan

Born in Tokyo, Nakada was the son of an organist and studied at Tokyo Music School. He has composed piano music, choral works, songs for TV and radio and children's songs. His compositional style is extremely lyrical. In 1947, he composed his first major work, *Six Children's Songs* premiering during the same year. This set of art songs, which is based on the poems from the Saijo Yaso Doyo Zenshu (Collection of children's songs by Yaso Saijo), which was described by Nakada as "the most significant book in my life," became his most representative work. It has been performed frequently not only in Japan but also in the United States and Europe. Although his main output was vocal music, Nakada also made a significant contribution to piano pedagogy, as his primary instrument was piano. The greatest contribution that Nakada made to piano pedagogy is his *Collection of Piano Pieces for Children*. Published in 1956, it is widely used in Japan.

#### *Japanese Festival*

Level: Elementary to Intermediate

Target audience: Children and Adults

Originally composed in 1955 and published in 1956 in Japan under the title of "Piano Pieces for Children" ("こどものピアノ曲"), the compositions were released in the United States as "Japanese Festival". The 17 pieces blend various styles from the Western canon with traditional Japanese idioms.

Alan Huckleberry, University of IA Pedagogy Project has beautiful recordings of all the pieces from this collection. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RS6YTC\\_7Jic](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RS6YTC_7Jic)

#### No. 6 Song of Twilight - RCM Level 3

Musical Concepts: sensitive control of the damper pedal for connecting LH chords (outline descending scale in A major); projecting and shaping long melody line over LH.

#### No. 13 Japanese Festival

Lively description of the traditional Japanese festival atmosphere. Several figures of this piece imply the instruments and sounds that are typically a part of such festivals' music, and it is particularly important for the performer to be aware of them. Listen for the following instruments – Japanese flute, matsuri daiko (festival drum) and the bachi (wooden stick).

Musical Concepts: legato and staccato articulations, legato pedaling, rapid alternation of hands. The opening flute tune is a good tool to learn how to use a flexible wrist motion. The LH holds the piece together.

No. 16 Etude Allegro - RCM Level 8

Musical concepts: RH forearm rotation, voicing, 3-octave glissando, phrase shaping and direction.

The Train Running (Duet/4-hands) - VERY fun!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FSdAcsMnWtk>

Other collections:

*The Piano Pieces for Children*. January 1, 2000, Carl Fischer. French Edition

*Piano Suite: The Four Seasons of Japan (Nihon no shiki : Yonshu rendan no tameno kumikyoku)*

December 1, 1979. Japanese Edition

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mNbyOspr3Vc>

*Japanese Festival: Seventeen Pieces for Piano*. British Columbia Conservatory of Music. Jan 1, 2012.

*One Piano 4 Hands*. [Ongaku-No-Tomo-Sha Corporation](#)

Music available at Sheet Music Plus, Amazon, and Scribd

References:

"The Pedagogical Implications of Yoshinao Nakada's Japanese Festival" A DMA document submitted to the Division of Graduate Studies and Research at the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music, November 3, 2006. By Tomoko Kanamaru

## **Sonny Chua (1967 – 2020) - Malaysia-Australia** **sonnychua.com**

Born in Malaysia, Sonny lived in Kuala Lumpur, Singapore and Malacca before immigrating to Australia. He studied at the Melbourne Conservatorium of Music specializing in piano performance, but his heart was in composing piano music. Sonny composed numerous pieces for his own piano students, taking into account their interests, such as dinosaurs, but with a pedagogical focus to address various techniques. His music delights in a spirited playfulness and many of his titles reflect the Malaysian culture's love for humor and food. Sonny will undoubtedly be remembered by many for the sheer joy his compositions brought to their playing.

*Cool Keys: 12 Irresistible Piano Solos Book 1*. Faber *ff* Music [fabermusic.com](http://fabermusic.com)

T-Rex hungry (ABRSM Grade 3)

Musical concepts: 2/2 meter & mixed meter feel (123-123-12), chromaticism, extreme dynamic contrasts, accents

*Cool Keys: 10 Irresistible Piano Solos Book 2.*

Midnight Snack

Musical concepts: 7/8 meter, LH ostinato, staccato, varying touches, 2-note & 3-note slurs

Angel

Musical concepts: bell effects, different touches, undulating 16<sup>th</sup> notes, contrasting moods

Others to check out:

You Dirty Rat

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8Cs5b0NtJ0Q>

Death by Pasta (tarantella) from *Scenes of Childhood: 14 Piano Solos*

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ijvOKa\\_FHPg](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ijvOKa_FHPg)

**Chee-Hwa Tan (1965 - ) Malaysia-U.S.A**

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All music can be accessed at the *Piano Safari* website: [pianosafari.com](http://pianosafari.com)

**Newest Release:**

*Once Upon A Journey, Book 1: Exploring Emotion, Story and Sound*

In this collection, I invite you to journey with me to explore emotion through the power of story and sound. Take advantage of the special journal reflection pages titled “Your Journey” that have been created specially to coach pianists to identify and process emotion in their music.

Each of the pieces in *Once Upon A Journey* has a different emotional palette and each piece describes an impression inspired by the cover art. I create different “sound stories” using a specific pianistic technique or touch. For those who are interested, the touches and techniques are beautifully described in “A Legacy of Touches from Rosina Lhévinne,” the *Piano Magazine* Autumn 2020 interview with the legendary pianist Daniel Pollack. You can access the article at [pianoinspires.com](http://pianoinspires.com)

Pieces performed in Webinar from *Journey Bk 1*:

No. 3 A Place to Dream

Musical concepts: 4/4 - 5/4 meter; falling broken intervals in RH; breathing through the phrase; modulation from FM to CM; voicing in the hidden melody.

No. 5 Coming Home

Musical concepts: RH lyrical melody over gentle LH 2-note slurs; feel of a 3 (waltz); LH melody with RH gentle chord-tone accompaniment; breathing through the phrase.

Other Collections:

1. *Through the Windowpane* (Piano Safari).  
Level: Elementary
2. *A Child's Garden of Verses* (Piano Safari).  
Level: Late Elementary - Early Intermediate
3. *Circus Sonatinas*  
Level: Late Elementary – Early Intermediate
4. *Windy Nights and Other Tales* (Piano Safari)  
Level: Intermediate – Late Intermediate
5. *A Royal Birthday Celebration: Suite in Baroque Style*  
Level: Intermediate – Late Intermediate