

Introduction

This collection of piano compositions by Lioko Kihara is full of melodies that evoke dreams, mysteries, and memories. They can be enjoyed by children and adults alike. While their beautiful harmonies and modes reflect Lioko's PianoLand method, these short pieces create their own unique world. Featuring such techniques as polyphony, ostinato, Latin rhythm and more, the compositions take the player on a musical adventure rich with varying textures. The degree of difficulty ranges from *PianoLand* Volumes 4, 5, and later to Bruckmuller or Sonatine.





Preface

Hello! My name is Lioko Kihara. I'm the composer of *A Small Box in My Heart* (Kokoro no Kobako).

I am very honored and pleased that you have taken the music of my compositions in your hand.

I created this piano suite to express the many and varied feelings that pour from my heart.

There is a small precious box inside one's heart. This box, which we normally do not open, is filled with many delicate things. They might be happy things, sad things, things you wish to let somebody know, things you never want to forget, things you cannot put into words.

In early 2011, I was planning to compose a new collection of small piano pieces by summer to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the birth of my piano pedagogy book *PianoLand*. Soon after I started composing, however, the Great Earthquake and Tsunami Disaster of East Japan occurred, and the whole country was plunged into deep sorrow. I was in the same mood too.

During that period, I tried to quietly open the small box in my heart. It was a rare moment in my life, because I could take the time to face myself honestly and listen carefully to the voices of the true self. In other words, I could recognize the varied feelings that came from the small box.

Each piece of this suite was born from this experience. I hope you will play or listen to them as you gently look into the small box in your heart.

The piano suite consists of eighteen pieces. They include four pieces for four hands, a piece for left hand alone, and two pieces with lyrics (you can sing along). May these pieces give your heart comfort and happiness.

I sincerely hope that *A Small Box in My Heart* will be performed all over the world!

Lioko Kihara

Midsummer, 2011

Acknowledgements

For her assistance in supplying illustrations, I would like to thank Ms. Chihiro Honma. She drew all the wonderful illustrations in this book after she listened to my performance of the entire suite. Also, heartfelt thanks to Masatoshi Kameda, the editor of this book.



Notes from the Composer

P.4 時の砂 Toki no suna (Sands of time)

Time going by is transformed into music. Ride on the wave of the quintuple meter, and feel the motion of each note as a fresh new encounter. Play it with your heart, not with your fingers.

P.5 好きなこと Sukina koto (My favorites)

What makes you excited? What are your favorite things? Remember the feeling when you are really into something you like. Play it with excitement.

The legato of the double 3rds in the left hand should be played like it is flowing. The melody should be played vividly and tunefully while expressing the character of each figure. Play as if you are making an ensemble with both hands.



P.6 君に伝えたいこと

Kimi ni tsutaetai koto (What I want to tell you)

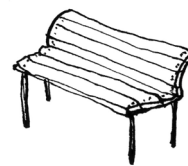
A thought you want to share with someone you care about is heard repeatedly in the canonic melody. It should be performed with the intention of “conveying something” and with richly expressed dynamics. The music is based on the Aeolian mode.

P.7 ほんとうの気持ちは…

Hontou no kimochi wa... (What I truly feel is...)

Let's hear the music of your honest feelings, as if you are digging deep down into your daily life and finding the voice of your heart there. Play it as your heart feels it.

The feeling of 3/4 time should be maintained even though the opening starts on the upbeat (in other words, you should always feel the downbeat as one). Pay attention, also, to the rhythmic change of hemiola, in which a unit of two bars sounds like 3/4 time (bars 3 & 4, 5 & 6, 10 & 11, and 12 & 13). While you play the successive chords near the end (from the 3rd beat of bar 17 to the 1st beat of bar 19), feel the change of expression created by the harmonic progression.



P.8 ここにいるよ Koko ni iruyo (Here I am)

Before playing, imagine a scene where you say “Here I am” to someone you care about.

The single melodic line played alternately with both hands at the beginning should sound natural and unforced. Bars 9 & 10 should be like an echo. After that, the music becomes canonic. Create drama with subtle changes in the dynamics.

P.10 嬉しいプレゼント

Ureshii purezento (Delightful gift)

This piece expresses the excited anticipation we feel when we open a delightful gift.

It starts with a single melody line. Soon after, a light accompaniment appears above the melody at first, then below. The middle section has frequent modulations. After passing through G7, C, C7, F, A7, Dm, G7, C, and D7, we return to G major, the tonic key. Enjoy this brief journey through four keys.

P.12 言葉よりも Kotoba yorimo (More than words)

Play with strong and decisive feelings that are more powerful than words, but also with sensitive intonation, as if you are weaving important words together. Play with a clear image of how you want to express the value, weight, and volume of each note in the non-legato unison melody. Keep driving the music in tempo until the end.

P.14 かなしくても Kanashikutemo (Even if I'm sad)

The lyrics and melody of this piece were born simultaneously. If you are singing, you could start playing from bar 26 as the introduction. In that case, however, do not overdo the ritardando. In the case of solo piano, perform as if you are conveying the lyrics to the audience.

Because of the polyphonic structure, the lower voice (by the left hand) should be played with as much care as the top voice to express the intervals between the notes. In the middle section, express the harmonic changes with warmth.





P.16 大空へ Ohzora e (To the sky)

If you look up, you will see the dome of the sky, which always remains unchanged. This piece was born as a pair with the previous piece “Kanashikutemo” (Even if I’m sad). Perform as if you are singing to the clear blue sky to express your feelings.

The left hand should support the melody with a very gentle timbre. If you are singing, you could use bars 5 to 8 as the introduction.

P.18 こころのオルゴール

Kokoro no orugoru (A music box in my heart)

Try your best not to change the pedal where there is no chord change. Play the melody as something beautiful and fleeting within the overtones.

Imagine a music box that keeps playing in your heart even before and after you perform this piece. The sound is otherworldly, as if coming from a distant place and time.



P.20 明日への道

Ashita e no michi (Road toward tomorrow)

There is a road that continues on to tomorrow—the road on which you are walking right now. You are heading toward the light of hope.

Starting out with a quiet passion, spin a tale that ends up brimming with self-confidence.

Observe the music carefully: the 3/4 time, the three-beat chords opening with a flat 3rd, the triplets, the rhythm with a tie between the triplets in the right hand, the melody which gradually becomes songful, and the chords that get thicker and more driving as you approach the end. Carefully observe the landscape of the score and pay attention to the images that resonate in your heart as you turn them into sound.

P.22 おだやかな時間

Odayaka na jikan (Moment of calm)

Even if we are living a busy life, our hearts crave a time of calm. Both music and life are made from time.

Feel each bar as one, and make each phrase feel large. The harmonic progression of the left hand gives variety to the right-hand melody in which the same upbeat note is continuously repeated. In the four-part polyphonic section (after bar 33), trace each horizontal voice carefully and give yourself over to the harmonic changes.



P.25 明日は いい日だ！ Ashita wa ii hi da (Tomorrow will be a good day) (for piano four hands)

Feel the Latin rhythm and have fun with your partner!

Only the primo plays at the beginning. The secondo will enter from the repeat. For the secondo, think of the diminishing sound of pizzicato on a double bass. In the middle section, clearly express the movement of each phrase and note the exchange of the bass line between the primo and secondo, the short phrase between the main phrases (e.g., the secondo at bar 14), the phrases that move together harmonically, and the quarter-note triplets (e.g., bar 20).

The syncopations and tied rhythms should not be played in the same manner every time. Each instance should be expressed as appropriate to its place. From bar 27, a crossing occurs; the right hand of the secondo goes above the left hand of the primo.





P.28 風は どこから

Kaze wa dokokara (Where does the wind come from?)

(for piano four hands)

A gentle wind comes blowing in from far away. From where? And to where?

The secondo should keep a stable 2:3 rhythm, and should not play the 16th notes of the right hand too loudly from bar 17. The primo should listen closely to the secondo while letting the song of the wind sing freely.

P.32 こころに羽をつけて

Kokoro ni hane o tsukete (Put wings on your heart)

(for piano four hands)

Are you caught up by worries? Put wings on your heart.

Although the arpeggios that are shared by the four hands look similar in terms of musical notation, there are differences. For example, the right hand of the primo at bars 1, 18, and 27 is taking the role of accompaniment, but starts singing the melody from the next bar (2, 19, and 28). Therefore, you should change the timbre and dynamics as the role changes. From bar 11, the music modulates to the relative minor. Then, from the crescendo just before bar 20, it returns to the original key. Try to let the audience see the landscape and structure of the music. Play with imaginative timbre and expression.

This piece can help you get used to reading chord names and symbols. Naming the chord for each sonority will make it easier for you to express the scenes you imagine.



P.36 いかないで

Ikanaide (Please, don't go) (for piano four hands)

“Ikanaide (Please, don't go)”—These are truly heartfelt words.

Atop the firm harmonic structure, the melody sings delicately and dynamically like a stringed instrument. Before playing, think about the meaning of the written changes in dynamics. From bar 33, the octave unison shared by both players should sound natural. From bar 49, pay attention to the expression of the melody and echo. The left hand from bar 57 blends in timbre with the right hand. After reaching the climax at bar 71 (allargando), drive the music with vigor to the sudden cutoff of the ending.

P.42 忘れないよ Wasurenaiyo (I won't forget you)

Because it is important, I cannot forget. I don't want to forget. And I will not forget.

All of the 5th finger notes of the left hand should be played a little bit longer than notated (like finger pedaling). Create the appropriate sonority by blending the finger pedal with the sustain pedal.

Follow the tenuto and accent markings and written terms faithfully. Play naturally and devote yourself to every single note. Even if you see the same musical figure patterns, do not play them the same if the terms and markings are different. For example, the pianissimo at bars 25-28 and the tenuto at bar 33-36, both played by the 1st finger of the left hand, should be expressed contrastingly. Reflect these differences in your sound.

P.45 思い出の小箱

Omoide no kobako (A little box of memories)

(for the left hand alone)

What is inside the little box of your memories? The time during which you are affectionately recalling the past will soon become a memory too. “Time” is truly mysterious. You may feel like cycling back from this piece to “Sands of time,” the first piece of the suite.

This piece is to be played by the left hand alone. Using legato and tempo rubato, savor the sonorities you carefully create. The right fingering depends largely on the size of your hands. You should find the musically appropriate fingerings for yourself. Do you stretch your fingers when using the sustain pedal? Or do you change the position of your left hand? Think and try. This applies even if you want to play the piece with both hands. Consider which fingerings will musically work the best for you.



Lyrics

かなしくても (Ka-na-shi-ku-te-mo / Even if I'm sad)

かなしくても 今日 眠ろう
Ka-na-shi-ku-te-mo kyo-o-wa ne-mu-ro-o
さびしくても 朝は くるから きっと
Sa-bi-shi-ku-te-mo a-sa-wa ku-ru-ka-ra kit-to

Even if I'm sad, I am going to sleep today
Even if I'm lonely, the morning will surely come

涙をふき 明日は 歌おう
Na-mi-da-o fu-ki a-shi-ta-wa u-ta-o-o
小さな声あわせ 歌おう そっと
Chi-i-sa-na ko-e a-wa-se u-ta-o-o sot-to

Wipe the tears from your eyes. Let's sing tomorrow
Joining our small voices, let's quietly sing together



大空へ (Oh-zo-ra-e / To the sky)

大空へ 舞い上がる 大きな 翼に
Oh-zo-ra-e ma-i-a-ga-ru oh-ki-na tsu-ba-sa-ni
乗せてって わたしを どこまでも
No-se-tet-te wa-ta-shi-o do-ko-ma-de-mo

Flying up into the vast blue sky
Let me ride on big wings that will take me anywhere

遠い昔 暮らした
To-o-i mu-ka-shi ku-ra-shi-ta
ふるさとの 町へ
Fu-ru-sa-to-no ma-chi-e

To the hometown
Where I lived so long ago

見上げれば 大空は
Mi-a-ge-re-ba oh-zo-ra-wa
蒼く 澄みきって
a-o-ku su-mi-kit-te

I look up at the sky
It is azure and crystal clear

ありがとう わたしを なぐさめる
A-ri-ga-to-o wa-ta-shi-o na-gu-sa-me-ru
大空よ
Oh-zo-ra-yo

Thank you, dear sky
For giving comfort to me



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About the author

Lioko Kihara is a composer, pianist, music educator, and author. Her *PianoLand* series of instruction books for the piano, first published in 1991, has had a major influence on music pedagogy in Japan, and now is regarded as one of the standard textbooks in the country.

Major Works

Piano Instruction Books

The *PianoLand* Series:

PianoLand (in 5 volumes, 1991~92)

PianoLand: Techniques for Fun (in 3 volumes, 1993~94)

PianoLand: For Concerts (in 3 volumes, 2000)

PianoLand: Preparatory (in 3 volumes, 2002)

PianoLand: Scales, Modes, and Arpeggios (2016)

PianoLand: Scale Practice Book for Children (2021)



Other books:

Opening Your Ears: How to Hear Chords (2014)

Twelve Doors for Improvisation (2019)

Music

Piano Music:

A Small Box in My Heart (Kokoro no Kobako) (suite for solo piano & piano four hands, 2011)

Rhapsody No. 1 (for piano four hands, 2012)

A Dream in a Dream (Yume no Naka no Yume) (suite for solo piano, 2012)

A Gentle Look (Yasashii Manazashi) (suite for solo piano, 2013)

Celestial Wind (Tenkuu no Kaze) (for piano left hand, dedicated to Izumi Tatenō, 2017)

The Trilogy of Seasons (Kisetsu no Sanbusaku) (suite for piano left hand, dedicated to Izumi Tatenō, 2020)

Rhapsody No. 2 (for solo piano & piano four hands, 2020)

Vocal & Choral Music:

Ballade for Children (Kodomotachi e no Barado) (1993)

Flower (Hana) (main theme song of the video game *Ore no Shikabane o Koeteyuke*, 1999)

My Wish ~On the Day of Christmas~ (Negai ~Kurisumasu no Hi ni~) (2005)

My Wish ~Getting Over the Great Earthquake~ (Negai ~Shinsai o Norikoete~) (2013)

Game Music:

Momotaro Densetsu (1987)

Momotaro Dentetsu (1988)

Linda Cube (1995~97)

Ore no Shikabane o Koete Yuke (1999)

Writing

Want to Play the Piano? (Piano o Hikitai Anatae) (2009/2015, Kodansha)

Raising Children in the Kihara Family ~Days of PianoLand & Smiles (Kiharake no Kosodate ~PianoLand to Egao no Mainichi) (2010, Kadokawa Shoten)