Snapshots
for string quartet
2 percussionists & piano / celesta

Cynthia Lee Wong
Co-commissioned by the New World Symphony,
America's Orchestral Academy
Michael Tilson Thomas, Artistic Director
and by the San Francisco Symphony
Michael Tilson Thomas, Music Director
Performance Notes

For all instruments:

Linger slightly on the first note of a glissando in order to make the pitch distinguishable.

For the piano / celesta:

The piano / celesta is set up in an L-shape so that the celesta is in the front and the piano is to the left of the player. The right side of the piano keyboard can touch the left side of the celesta at or around the celesta's A, below middle C (the lowest celesta note written in this piece). The L.H. invariably plays the piano, though the R.H. switches between the piano and celesta.

Duration: ca. 10'15”
**Program Notes**

In *Snapshots*, I became interested in re-connecting with the playful aspects of the creative process that had first enchanted me as a child. *Snapshots* therefore embraces qualities of rebirth and renewal with spirited gusto.

In this one-movement, perpetual-mobile work, moments fly by so quickly that only impressions (or snapshots) of an experience can be felt. *Snapshots* also refer to rapidly crescendoing 'whooshes' that whirl throughout the piece. This is similar to life hurling its curveballs, throwing one off-balance as one tries to adapt to life's ever-changing moments. There are, however, slow and introspective moments, to remind oneself of one's inner fortitude, despite the turbulence on the surface.

A unique feature of *Snapshots* is its keyboard part, which requires the pianist to play the piano and celesta simultaneously. This idea originated from my teenage years, during which my composition lessons took place in a room where one of the pianos was tuned a quarter-tone flat while the other was tuned normally. Given my composition teacher had perfect pitch, I enjoyed some devilish fun, playing both pianos to greet my teacher as he entered the room. As *Snapshots* is the first piece in which I have specified this two-keyboard setup, the writing itself is traditionally idiomatic. I imagine, though, that this arrangement could be explored further to lead to new and interesting possibilities.
**Instrumentation**

String quartet
1 Piano / Celesta

**Percussion 1:**

Xylophone
Wooden wind chimes
Temple block
Wood block
Snare drum
Flexatone
Vibraslap*
Tam-Tam*

**Percussion 2:**

Chimes
Vibraphone
Bass drum
Slide whistle
Triangle
Vibraslap*
Tam-Tam*

*played by both percussionists
Snapshots

* gliss. accelerates and cresc. toward the top, as though off-balance and lurching forward
Snaphots

Wooden wind chimes

(sustain sound as needed, though without any discernable pattern)

(enter imperceptively)

slow gliss. that accelerates rapidly at the very end

L.V.
Snapshots

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vlc.

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

Keybd.

(enter imperceptively)
slow gliss. that accelerates rapidly at the very end

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vlc.

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

Keybd.

(enter imperceptively)
slow gliss. that accelerates rapidly at the very end
Snapshots