

The fund manager becomes a composer, inspired by Jensen Huang to create "Silicon Island", a piece dedicated to Taiwan

(CNA Reporter Zhao Jingyu, Taipei, 10th) Owens Huang, a hedge fund manager living in the San Francisco Bay Area, has transformed into a composer. He has created a septet titled "Silicon Island," which will have its world premiere in Taiwan. Owens Huang said that this piece was inspired by Nvidia founder Jensen Huang during GTC, and he wanted to "use music to show the world how great Taiwan is."

In an exclusive interview with CNA (Central News Agency), Owens Huang shared that he was inspired during a speech by Jensen Huang, where he encouraged everyone to share Taiwan's stories and strengths with the world. "I was suddenly moved," Owens Huang said, noting that he had long been optimistic about Taiwan's development. He often had to explain why he invested in Taiwanese companies, and now he says, "I can use music to tell the world why Taiwan and its people are worth investing in."

When Owens Huang was a student at Jianguo High School, he was forced by his music teacher to listen to Taipei Philharmonic Radio. This experience sparked his love for classical music. He began learning piano at the age of 20, but at one point, he gave it up. It wasn't until the COVID-19 pandemic that he resumed learning and started composing. He spent a year conceptualizing the piece "Silicon Island," which he began writing in May of this year. The piece is approximately 10 minutes long and consists of three movements. Owens expressed his gratitude to Cellist Tzu-Wei Huang, the founder of the Morningside Heights Ensemble, who invited him to create the piece using the ensemble's instrumentation, with the addition of a flute.

Owens Huang explained that the "First Movement" begins with the voyage of early Chinese settlers sailing off the coast of Tainan 400 years ago. He uses music to depict the arrival of these pioneers in Taiwan, incorporating the indigenous Amis people's "Elder's Drinking Song" into a melody that symbolizes the traditional Chinese pentatonic scale, exploring the encounters between different civilizations.

The "Second Movement" opens with a flute solo introducing a Japanese melody, accompanied by pizzicato from the violin, symbolizing the complex issue of Taiwanese identity. The movement culminates in a nearly 20-measure interweaving of various instruments, portraying the emotional turmoil Taiwan endured during World War II. In the aftermath, rather than experiencing a rebirth, the island's diverse groups—including indigenous people, early pioneers, and new Chinese immigrants—suffered equally profound torments under the new fascist regime. Owens Huang shared that this section still brings him to tears every time he listens to it, saying, "Music must first move me before it can move others."

The "Third Movement" aims to express Taiwan's recovery with U.S. aid, its hard work, and progress up to the wave of technology and AI revolution. Owens revisits themes from the previous two movements, showcasing various joyful and bright elements, using music to tell the world that Taiwan is worthy of investment.

"I didn't come from a formal academic background in music, so I have no constraints in my composition. I'm quite resilient, and if people don't like my music, it doesn't bother me," said Owens Huang. He also approaches his music from a market-oriented perspective, trying to understand why people like or dislike it. **"But I won't change my original intention. Just as people might rush to sell a stock, I'll analyze it rationally from a market perspective and remain the contrarian minority who sticks with it."**

Owens Huang also shared that his sense of Taiwanese identity strengthened after moving abroad. "Right now, Taiwan faces external threats and internal chaos. I hope that, just as different cultures can connect through melodies in music, people in the real world can also find unity." Reflecting on his experiences, Owens said that the investment market mirrors people's collective optimism or pessimism about the future. **"I've learned to approach it like a monk, making rational judgments amidst these emotions. As for my emotional side, I purify it all into my music."**

The Morningside Heights Ensemble's "Folk Rhapsody" concert will take place on August 17 at the Tainan Wansha Performance & Arts Centre and on August 18 at the National Concert Hall in Taipei. These performances will also mark the world premiere of the "Silicon Island Septet."