

# Return from paradise to reverse culture shock

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Anne Ku

# Culture Shock!

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**Anne Ku has moved twelve times in her life. She lived in Taiwan, Japan, the US and Great Britain, but she experienced her biggest culture shock in the Netherlands. This inspired her to write Culture Shock, a chamber opera, with which she concluded her studies at Utrecht Conservatory.**

"The most difficult thing in the Netherlands is the language. After four years I still don't feel quite comfortable when I'm having an everyday conversation", she says. "I don't understand the subtleties, I'm never quite sure why it is people laugh. Added to which is the huge sense of guilt. My presence forces other people to speak English. That causes me to feel very uncomfortable."

UBLAD, 12 June 2008

# Stages of culture shock, Kalvero Oberg 1954

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## **honeymoon period**

excitement of everything new and positive

## **rejection or withdrawal phase**

the newcomer feels rejected because he does not understand the behaviours of others. He finds everything to be difficult and complains incessantly.

## **regression stage**

the newcomer withdraws and finds everything about his home country to be wonderful and wonders why he ever left

## **recovery**

he survives and becomes more comfortable with the language and customs and acceptance of the culture

## **reverse or return culture shock**

he returns to his home country and discovers either he has changed or things are not as they used to be

# Anne Ku says

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Born in Brunei of Chinese parents, I spent most of my childhood on an American air base in Okinawa, Japan. At 18, I won a full scholarship to Duke University in the USA. While pursuing my undergraduate degree in engineering and mathematics, I also studied at Cornell, McGill, and Oxford. Afterwards, I obtained my graduate degrees in London. I worked in consulting, banking, energy, and publishing before music.

My father was born and raised in Shanghai. My mother's family left central China 14 generations earlier and moved to Taiwan. They divorced when I was 20 years old. My brother lives in New Jersey. My sister moved to Maui in 1998, my mother in 2007.

In 2004, I moved to the Netherlands to join my then-boyfriend whom I married in 2005. I obtained my music degree in composition and piano teaching from Utrecht Conservatory in 2008. Since then I have been active as a chamber musician (duo with guitar, French horn, cello, etc) and concert producer.

In 2010, we obtained our green cards and travelled to the USA.

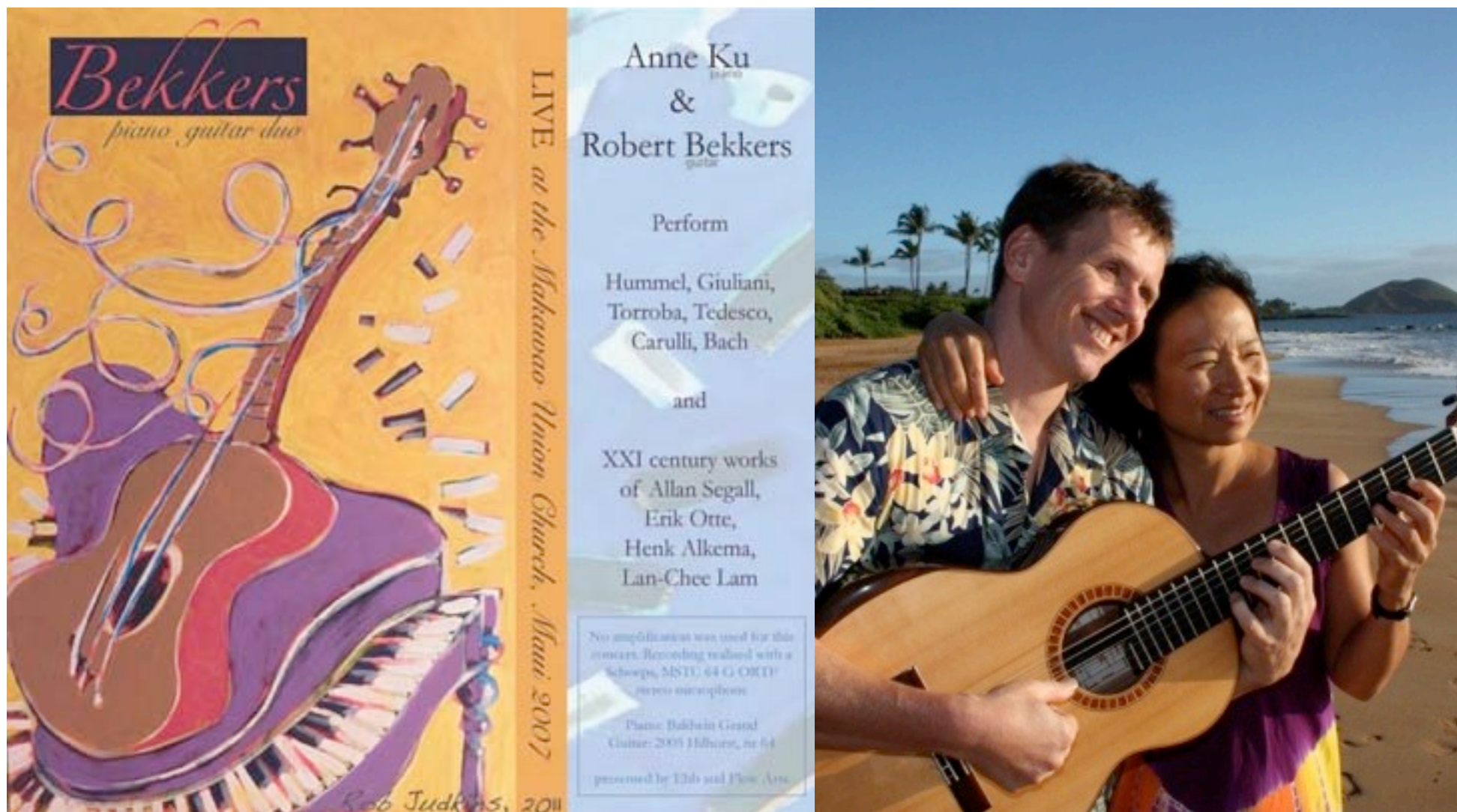
# Maui, number ONE travel destination *Condé Nast*

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- “Best Island in the World” - 16th consecutive time
- 2010 Rating: 90.7 (readers choice awards)
- beautiful, hip, and exclusive
- world-class wind and waves
- award-winning cuisine



# First public concert in USA: Maui, December 2007



**Bekkers**  
*piano guitar duo*

LIVE at the Mahaloa Union Church, Maui 2007

Anne Ku  
piano  
&  
Robert Bekkers  
guitar

Perform

Hummel, Giuliani,  
Torroba, Tedesco,  
Carulli, Bach

and

XXI century works  
of Allan Segall,  
Erik Otte,  
Henk Alkema,  
Lan-Chee Lam

No amplification was used for this concert. Recording realized with a Schoeps, MSTU, 64 G ORT stereo microphone

Piano: Baldwin Grand  
Guitar: 2005 Hillborn, nr 64  
presented by E2b and Flow Arts

Rob Judkins, 2011

Anne Ku and Robert Bekkers performing on a beach in Maui, Hawaii, December 2007. Anne Ku is playing the piano and Robert Bekkers is playing the guitar.

# Chronology of travel

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- **December 2001** Mother applied for green card for me - then single.
- **April 2010** Green card issued, expires 21-10-2010
- **18-10-2010** AMS - LHR - BOS start of 5-week coast-to-coast concert tour
- **25-11-2010** arrive in Maui, Thanksgiving Day
- **14-5-2011** leave Maui: OGG-OAK-DEN-COS-LGA-LHR-AMS
- **28-5-2011** return to Utrecht
- **13-8-2011** AMS-ORD-SFO-OGG

# Frances Ku, painter of paradise, since 1998

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Mother moved to Maui in 2007

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# Sunset in Wailea

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Tuesday, 7 June 2011



Tuesday, 7 June 2011

# Panoramic view from apartment - every day

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# Reverse culture shock

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- aloha spirit vs being invisible
- the weather takes getting used to
- mode of transport
- tap water, refillable coffee and tea
- hayfever
- agendas, competition for attention
- diabetes

# Aloha 'Oe (Farewell to thee)

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Ha-a he-o ka-u-a-i-na-pa-li

Ke-ni-hi a-e-la-ka-na he-le

E-ha ha-i a-na-i-ka-li-ko

Pu-a a-hi-hi

Le-hu-a o u-ka

A-lo-ha oe, A-lo-ha oe

E-ke o-na-o-na no-ho i-ka li-po

A fond embrace, A ho-i a-e au

Until we meet again.

# Next house concerts in Utrecht

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- Monument House Concert Series, since 2006
- American philanthropy and fundraising for artist-in-residence fellowship
- Organic wine tasting for all 3 events
- Friday 1 July 2011 evening Nathanael May, pianist
- Saturday 2 July 2011 evening Brendan Kinsella, pianist
- Sunday 3 July 2011 afternoon Trio for Three (soprano, harp, French horn)
- <http://www.pianoguitar.com/concerten/>