



into the light

WORLD MUSIC OF KOREA II
Classical & Contemporary Traditional Music

about the painter, CHANG Ucchin

"A lover of simple and modest things, Chang successfully captured life's complexities on small canvas. He renounced all worldly desires and created images of the world in which everyone would like to live. Like his personality, Chang's pictures are suffused with warmth and generosity."

ChangUcchin Foundation was established in 1998 by Chang's family members, his former students, and colleagues. The foundation, located in Singal where the painter spent his last years, offers information about Chang's life and works, as well as hosts various cultural events surrounding his legacy. If you have any questions or comments concerning the foundation, please contact us at webmaster@ucchinchang.org

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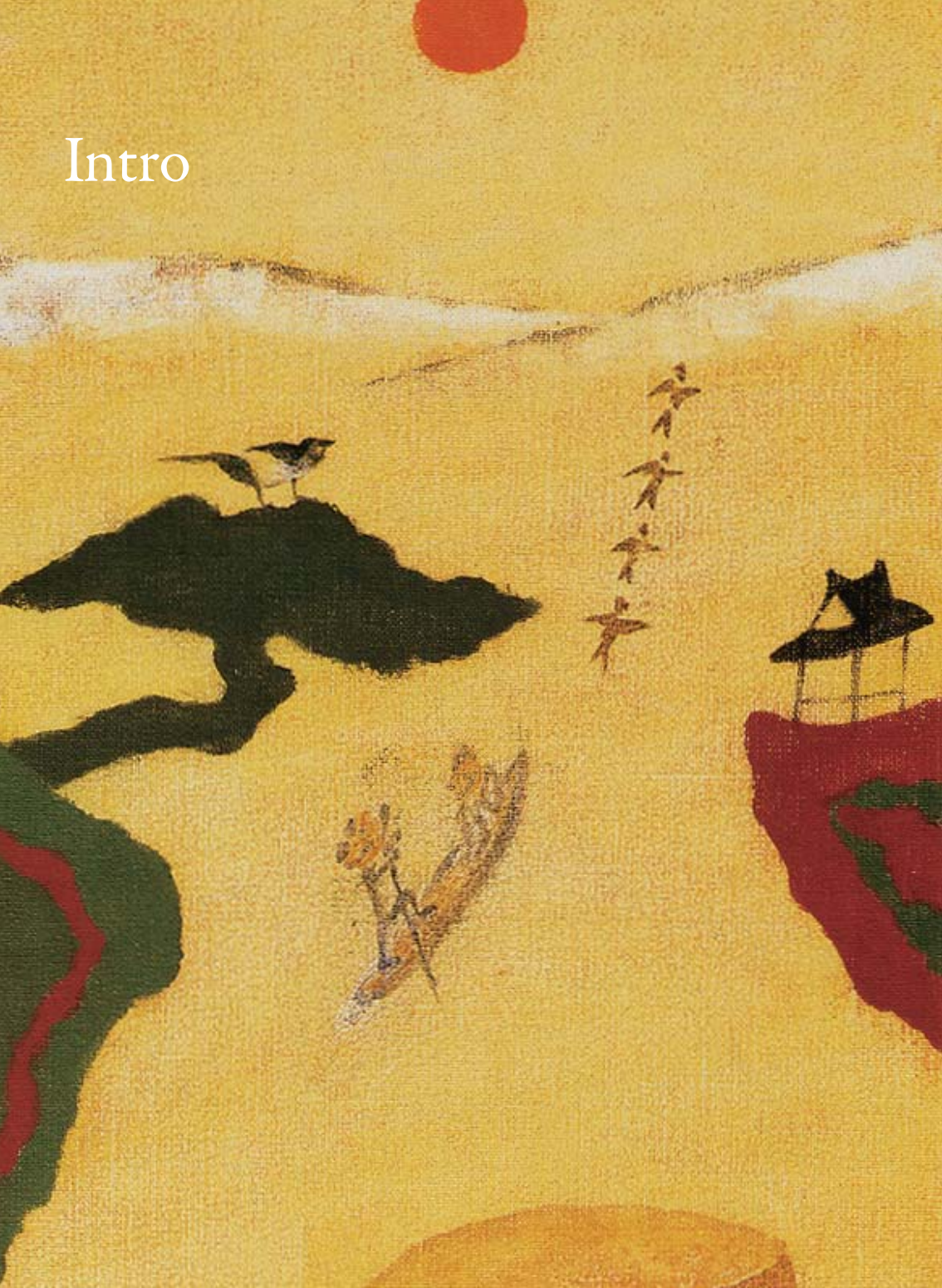
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Intro



AHN
Sook-sun



If we divide traditional Korean music into the two broad fields of instrumental and vocal music, AHN Sook-sun is one person among only a few, whose name will constantly be mentioned in both domains. Receiving national acclaim and designated as an intangible cultural asset of Korea, AHN Sook-sun is a master of the gayageum, being known as a living legend under whose teachings traditional pansori has been best preserved. For nearly fifty years this famous figure of the art world has devoted his life to pansori, being a living example of how traditional Korean solo-performing historical dramas of pansori have been passed down to the 20th Century, and transformed by evolving into new forms. Her musical life could be compared with a treasure chest detailing the long history of pansori in Korea.

AHN Sook-sun is convinced that if among ten thousand applauding spectators just one person remains unsatisfied by a performance, then that performance has not been a success. Perhaps for this reason, her performances are always passionate and the audiences are deeply moved. Among the pansori works, it is when AHN Sook-sun sings the love song from chunhyangga that we can sense the romanticism, or are able to sense an anxious mind stealing a glance when she sings from shimcheongga, or we are able to laugh at AHN Sook-sun's jesting in the pansori work sugungga.

If you wish to closely observe the true character of pure pansori rather than the form of contemporary creative classical music, then listening to the celebrated singing of AHN Sook-sun is all that is necessary. If you'd like to know of Korean pansori's past, contemporary and future forms then all you need is to experience the expansive talents of AHN Sook-sun's stage performances.

Baramgot



'Freedom' or 'impromptu performance' are irreplaceable virtues that are part of a traditional Korean music style. This style is usually known as Sinawe, which as in jazz improvisation makes full use of various traditional instruments, so that a diverse spectrum of unique tones, timbres and rhythms are featured, and such a style occupies an important place in traditional Korean music. Sinawe's free-spirited lack of restraint is an essential part of modern Korean creative classical music that will help our understanding of its important role in Korean world music. This free spirit and impromptu performance paints a diverse and splendid musical palate giving Korea's contemporary traditional music scene the new leading performance group Baramgot. With Won Il and Pak Sun-A at the center, Baramgot is a group consisting of five performers. Especially, as Baramgot's artistic director, composer, flute and percussion player, Won Il formed Baramgot in 2004, deciding as leader the group's musical organization. He had been responsible for organizing the percussion music group Puri,





which was respected for expanding new horizons in Korean percussion. Baramgot expanded on Puri's form of percussion performance and at the same time continued the tradition of Sinawe, receiving recognition for presenting it in a modern form of perfection. In addition, the percussion group deals with Korean traditional myths such as the Great Journey of Princess Bari, with the main motive of making Korea understood through myths, legends, and folk tales. When Baramgot put this kind of music on stage, their music features a kind of musical play, where sounds represent a musical language with dance, images, lighting and art combined to create a visual genre reinforcing this musical theater.

Baramgot in Korean is a compound formed of 'baram' meaning 'wind', and 'got' meaning 'cape', this name being chosen by the group for capturing their own unique artistic voice with two words quintessentially associated with Korean music and an arousing public response on stage. Officially announcing an album in 2008, the group has embarked on perfecting their performances for global audiences so that Korean music and the arts can become a moving, touching experience for those unfamiliar with Korean culture.

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Be-Being



In the Korean world music scene, all of the active performing arts groups have made constant efforts to preserve and develop the traditional musical heritage passed down to them from the past. Formed in 2007, Be-Being is also one of these groups, who has borrowed from traditional Korean musical forms and material, but has gathered together more experimental musicians than in other Korean performance groups. Their works are of course about the formation of sounds, yet their music reveals and embodies a visual imagination. While Korea's traditional musicians associate all things with their forms in nature, Be-Being takes a further step by combining traditional music's visual images with dance and video on stage. As a result, space and time are transcended in their work, elevating Korean musical and cultural heritage into a universal concept.



In order to realize their productions, the seven members of Be-Being previously worked actively in various fields. Be-Being's members have written and performed not only in traditional music, but also popular music, modern dance and film music as well, receiving recognition over the last ten years for their work. As a result, this diverse experience and know-how has been infused into their music, that combines traditional and modern music in an original way, and realizes this fusion in their on stage works.

Their performances on stage provide a good opportunity to directly ascertain with our own eyes and ears the various elements of Korean culture's formation. Through their music you can encounter Buddhist music and arts that are deeply rooted in traditional Korean culture. This kind of traditional Korean music has not become extinct in our modern age, but continues to develop and be appreciated in the 21st Century. Be-Being has created a precedent by showing the effectiveness of a traditional heritage transposed into the present, to the extent that in order to fully understand 21st Century Korean world music it is necessary to experience one of Be-Being's performances.



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CHAE
Soo-jung





Korea's solo historical dramas of traditional pansori have a long history through which more modern forms have inherited a precious musical heritage. Centering around the five traditional story forms of pansori: simcheongga, heungbuga, jeokbyeokga, sugungga, and chunhyungga, even today new works are constantly appearing and the genre remains deeply loved by Koreans as an important traditional form of Korea's music heritage. Along with AHN Sook-sun, CHAE Soo-jung is a pre-eminent singer conveying on stage pansori's pure artistic values, while reinterpreting this inheritance in a fresh way. For instance, on the traditional stage a singer/narrator and drummer appear alone, and yet it is a special feature in performances lead by CHAE Soo-jung, that in an unprecedented way a jester may appear, so that those unfamiliar with pansori can feel emotions such as interest and tension more intensely. Of course such attempts make pansori more clearly understandable, and position CHAE Soo-jung as an important artist of our times.

Furthermore, CHAE Soo-jung assembles a diverse range of specialized musicians in the performance group, such as players of the daegum, haegum, ajeng and percussion, aiming to actively popularize classical Korean music. The greatest virtue of this performance group is that traditional forms are maintained at the same time as new experiments are tried out so that the general public find the music more accessible. Under these circumstances, the solo performances of the historical dramas are not felt to be too long or boring, and no special information needs to be prepared before the performance, as everyone will be satisfied with CHAE Soo-jung's pansori performance group, that is full of interest, artistic expression, and human emotions. This is a group that holds us spellbound simultaneously in the charms of Korea's traditional and world music.

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Dulsori





From the end of the 1980s Korean traditional music became known around the world, so that Korea's representative music Samul-Nori was viewed as the representative percussion style. However Korean percussion is not just about Samul-Nori, but about traditional percussionists ceaselessly coming together to evolve new forms of music over and over. Presently, the performing group that has reached the zenith of that evolution is DulSORI. As Korean artists, from the very outset of receiving a formal invitation to perform at the WOMAD festival, over the past 20 years they have constantly received loving praise for captivating and enthralling people with their percussion music.

DulSORI's music breathes life into all of the fused traditional musical rhythms from the music of the Royal Court through to folk music of the people. Furthermore, they don't simply follow in the footsteps of these traditional rhythms, but sometimes extend the organization of the musical works, transforming them endlessly by incorporating modern elements and impressions. In their representative work, Binari, the structure and rhythm of the musical pieces, and the title as well are traditional, and yet, when performed on stage Binari's creativity comes to the fore becoming a completely new work. Also they include a diverse range of instruments in their percussion performances where they make full use of the stage, providing both a constant pleasure for the eyes and ears. Of course on stage they offer performances from the angle of Korean culture, especially culture of the Korean people developed and coming to fruition over a great number of centuries. This makes a chance to see their performances an ideal way to understand this process. For people unaware of Korea's world music or people with an interest in Korea's percussion music, DulSORI can be regarded as a touchstone or great gateway to understanding Korean music and culture. World leading festivals and concert halls, such as WOMAD and WOMEX, are places where world music devotees can witness DulSORI in action, and will vouch for DulSORI's continued presence.

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Gong Myong



In places such as Cuba and Brazil, the rhythm form embodies each person's unique name, and this is also the case in traditional Korean rhythms. More recently, Korean percussion instrument players faithfully tied to performing traditions rhythms have gone forward to embrace Western rhythms with their traditional instruments, advocating a crossover or fusion of playing styles. Gong Myong do not simply adhere to tradition nor do they look for an excuse to create a new experiment in artificial rhythms.

While those people familiar with Korean traditional music may view the constituent members of Gong Myong as “breaking the rules,” those unfamiliar with traditional music may approach their music regarding it as “fresh and innovative.” For Gong Myong traditional Korean music, rather than being felt to be difficult classical music of the royal court, is easily accessible so that the diversity and liveliness of rhythms being played on traditional Korean instruments is played out



in full whether on the stage or on their albums. It may be said that Gong Myoung performs just with drums as in the traditional Korean Samul-Nori folk groups, but while the four members all play with drums, they also include a range of other traditional instruments at times, even an electric Janggu made of bamboo (a traditional percussion instrument in Korea, similar to the Indian Dhol), which all heighten the effect of completeness in their music.

Whether their music is heard on stage or on an album, their creative music can sometimes be the most representatively Korean, while at the same time conveying archetypal emotions that transcend borders, regions and races. Now while celebrating the twelfth anniversary of their group's formation Gong Myoung, after releasing four previous albums, has announced a tenth anniversary souvenir album of live recordings of their various performances from around the world such as in the US, Europe and Japan.



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HWANG
Byung-ki





When seeing for the first time the twelve stringed Korean traditional instrument, the gayageum, some may think it is similar to the Japanese koto. Likewise, a person listening for the first time to the gayageum's traditional musical style of sanjo may associate it with Indian raga. However, gayageum music and the instrument itself, with twelve bowstrings that elegantly conjure up natural sounds, is a representative instrument of Korea. Now, various performance and composition techniques are constantly being shown, and recently a custom-fitted 25 string gayageum has been produced, but the gayageum will remain among Korea's traditional instruments as the one that comes to mind first as being deeply symbolic of Korea's musical traditions. Thanks to the efforts of gayageum master players this instrument remains cherished even in a modern age. Among these masters, it is Hwang Byungki who has been made the subject of much reverent discussion.

As a composer, performer and educator, HWANG Byung-ki is adored both at home and abroad, especially for transforming and innovating the way the gayageum is played. HWANG Byung-ki has developed unique performance techniques and composition that bestow the instrument with limitless capabilities. Born in Seoul in 1936, he majored in Law, but started performing the gayageum in his early twenties winning numerous prizes. From the 1960s he started composing, reaching the height of his career in the 1970s when he began to receive much acclaim. Still today, it cannot be denied that HWANG Byung-ki continues to be one of traditional Korean music's greatest exponents. We are able to feel the aesthetic beauty of the gayageum as one of traditional Korea's string instruments, when listening to him perform. At the same time we can certainly know more about the traditional style of sanjo to which the gayageum is played. Among his works, whether Silkroad (Bidangil), Chimhyangmu, or Labyrinth (Migung), these three pieces are the best works to listen to at first in order to truly understand the tradition of Korean gayageum performance. HWANG Byung-ki will surely remain as one of the most prominent performers of traditional Korean music in the 21st Century, and certainly a representative musician of Korean world music.



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KANG
Eun-il
Haegum
Plus





The Korean traditional instrument, the Haegum, is similar to a fiddle, being made of two strings of silk thread twined into strands, a bow made of horsehair, and a wooden soundbox. It is well known as being best suited for classical music. It may be said that the Haegum is the most representative of instruments with a propensity for creating traditional Korean sounds. A musician playing the Haegum instrument perfectly understands and is able to perform with this instrument knowing it embodies Korean tradition, and having satisfied these conditions becomes involved in a creative performance and a dynamic stage environment, even when recording. Such a scenario is perfectly demonstrated by the musician, KANG Eun-il.

The Haegum is an instrument well loved by Koreans with a history of over 1000 years. KANG Eun-il is a progressive musician, who is able to preserve and transfer to today the beauty of the Haegum, seeking to transform traditional performance methods with new techniques and musical pieces. In Korea, terms such as crossover and fusion tend to be applied, and whether KANG Eun-il's music could be regarded this way or not, her music has already evaded such labeling. Through her bowing, the Haegum takes on a new force of life, so that whether with Western musical instruments, or the traditional instruments of several countries, her music harmonizes to the point that we are able to perceive completely new and unheard possibilities come together.

KANG Eun-il HaegumPlus's contemporary traditional music group formed in 1999. Including the WOMAD festival, the group has gained an international reputation through their many domestic and international performance activities, releasing four albums through which the Korean public have become devoted fans. After numerous performance schedules in countries such as the USA, Japan and Europe, KANG Eun-il Haegum Plus have become a critical test case for understanding Korea's "world-music" to the extent that when talking of Korean contemporary traditional performances, they have become representative artists you must certainly meet, if given the chance.

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The Korean
Creative
Music
Society -
Da'ak



The music of Da'ak has become a way of life, fusing with the traditional musical culture of Korea. Korea's tea culture may be similar to that of neighboring countries China and Japan, but in Korea places special emphasis on contemplation, moral conduct and meditation. Deeply fused with this traditional Korean cultural life is music. The Korean Creative Music Society or Da'ak embody through their performances an easier way to appreciate the kind of tea culture and music accompanying a traditional Korean lifestyle.

Da'ak prefer understatement and the small scale, rather than the opulent. Their music is not intense or impressive either, but in their music can be found an elegance, and a suggestion of the zenith of traditional Korean chamber music. Although not possessing the beat of the heart nor its forceful rhythm, instead Da'ak convey the warmth of humanity while sipping on a warm cup of tea. Although the group uses many traditional stringed instruments such as the Korean zithers (geomungo and yanggeum), twelve-stringed harp (gayageum), and fiddle (haegum), combined with traditional woodwind instruments such as the large and small bamboo flutes (daegum and sogum), understanding Korea's cultural heritage requires only a small barrier that Da'ak's music helps to overcome. While appreciating their music, you may be able to imagine the traditional culture and its flowing moments conveyed in the music composed by Korea's ancestors.

Imagine Korea's traditional chamber music and accompanying traditional tea culture, perhaps with some Oriental calligraphy, singing and dancing, all of these forms organically emerging together as part of a culture. In the same way, Da'ak is not simply representing Korea's traditional music but also its culture. Unlike elsewhere, Koreans did not pass through as many successive waves of political and economic influences from abroad, and thus Koreans' heartstrings that transmit traditional culture and its fragrances could be concretely embodied in a tangible form with The Korean Creative Music Society.



Noreum Machi



No matter which region of the world, drumming on percussion instruments allows a rhythm to reverberate in our hearts. In Korea as well, the drum is one of the most cherished instruments, being performed on its own by groups of people in the form of Samul-Nori. Even when Korean traditional music became known in the form of world music, it was group performances of Samul-Nori that first gained attention, so the group Noreum Machi became the heirs of this group-drumming tradition, performing their music in the form of a crossover with music of various regions of the world. Of course existing present and future characteristics of Samul-Nori are being extended thanks to Noreum Machi's major efforts.



Noreum Machi's strongest virtue is that they are able to express so well the charm of traditional Korean music through their drum playing. In traditional Korean music, not only drums but breathing, rhythm, and an ornamenting system in melody called Shigimsae, are all crucial,



and these kinds of traditional forms and usage not only survive well in Noreum Machi's music but at the same time are reinterpreted in modern arrangements. Thanks to this group, Samul-Nori has not remained a static traditional music form, becoming more flexibly and variously expressed these days. This is exactly Noreum Machi's important contribution, blending domestic popular music with jazz, flamenco and other world music styles without creating any disparate elements.

While Noreum Machi follow the most traditional forms on stage with their organization of members, clothing and most certainly their traditional musical heritage, their performance of traditional Korean music's purity is heightened by the traditional rhythms of diverse regions of the world, which serves to express a shared humanity. They only released one album in 2007, but their true character is after all, better revealed on stage. Among Korea's world music the first percussion music that became known to the world was Samul-Nori, but these days the works of modern percussionists can be appreciated owing largely to Noreum Machi's music

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Pansori
Project Za





In pansori a person as narrator unravels a story based on a traditional historical drama through musical theatre. The story contains folk tales, fables, parables, societal satire and criticism familiar to the Korean people, while contemporary pansori has more various themes and stories. In addition, traditional pansori is limited to the accompaniment of a skilled drummer, while in modern pansori more diverse instruments and performers appear on stage to complement the drummer. In this way, Korean pansori has been able to continuously evolve becoming one of Korea's important traditional music genres. Pansori Project Za doesn't simply focus on traditional themes and elements but has also admitted and developed diverse styles from overseas. Pansori Project Za, after being inspired by Brecht's historical play, 'A Good Woman of Setzuan,' brought to the world's attention in 2007 their newly created pansori performance called 'Sacheonga'. In this work the basic instruments of pansori are utilized in a very traditional way, but the musical value is heightened with the addition of diverse instruments related to bass and percussion. Thus, pieces are still infused with traditional forms of expression with the fluctuating rhythms, melodies and tones being left intact, never going out of fashion or boring the listening audience who remain engrossed in pansori's charms.

Although a great deal of weight is placed on pansori in traditional Korean music, if unfamiliar and overly long it runs the danger of boring an audience. However, Project Za feature their work 'Sacheonga' in such a way that it remains faithful to the pansori tradition while presenting modern, enjoyable content. The reason why Project Za has been able to present a new horizon for pansori is due to the writer and musical director, LEE Jaram, whose attempts to overcome traditional barriers since childhood by experiencing diverse genres of music and art, have left their mark on the music of Project Za. In Brecht's own works 'alienation' is prominently featured, but with Lee Jaram at the helm of 'Sacheonga' any sense of alienation is replaced with a familiarity that allows people of the world to approach with ease and a sense of fun the realm of Korean pansori.

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Sonagi Project



The two-headed drum (janggo) like other traditional Korean percussion instruments has a long history, but is considered to be the most suitable instrument for expressing diverse Korean rhythms. It is also able to be used for performances both inside or outdoors, can be used by a solo drummer or in a larger, varied performance with multiple drummers. Furthermore, it is a representative Korean musical instrument, whose rhythms flowing out of it, whether played alone or with accompaniment, could never be seen as inferior. Sonagi Project is a representative contemporary creative classic music performance group, who adapt the janggo's uses to a modern context in which they experiment with and pioneer new music forms.

CHANG Jae-hyo of Sonagi Project, received attention from the time of his debut as a vocalist and percussionist. Especially in the year 2000, when working with his former group Vinalog, he became talk of the town, attempting as the main musician a superb harmonization of



classical and contemporary forms of Korean music. After that time, his efforts toward Korean world music were materialized in his newly founded performing group, Sonagi Project. After being limited to just two kinds of instrument, the janggo and the human voice, CHANG Jae-hyo's former performance group Vinalog was superseded in Sonagi Project, with fluctuating rhythms and more discriminating, diverse artistic experiments on stage, that remain familiar and intimate at the same time. For example, after being invited to a janggo ensemble in 2008 entitled Forest of Wind, despite the limited forms of drum and song, the stage was transformed from the outset into a spectacle of true-to-life passion that still receive comment today for pioneering new territory in the domain of Korean classical performances. This is the result of the sheer capabilities of CHANG Jae-hyo and the other four performing members of his group. CHANG Jae-hyo's Sonagi Project use the janggo to convey the Korean people's emotional realm, the group becoming themselves a kind of domicile, a symbol of the way Korean world music is unfolding in an international space.

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Tori
Ensemble





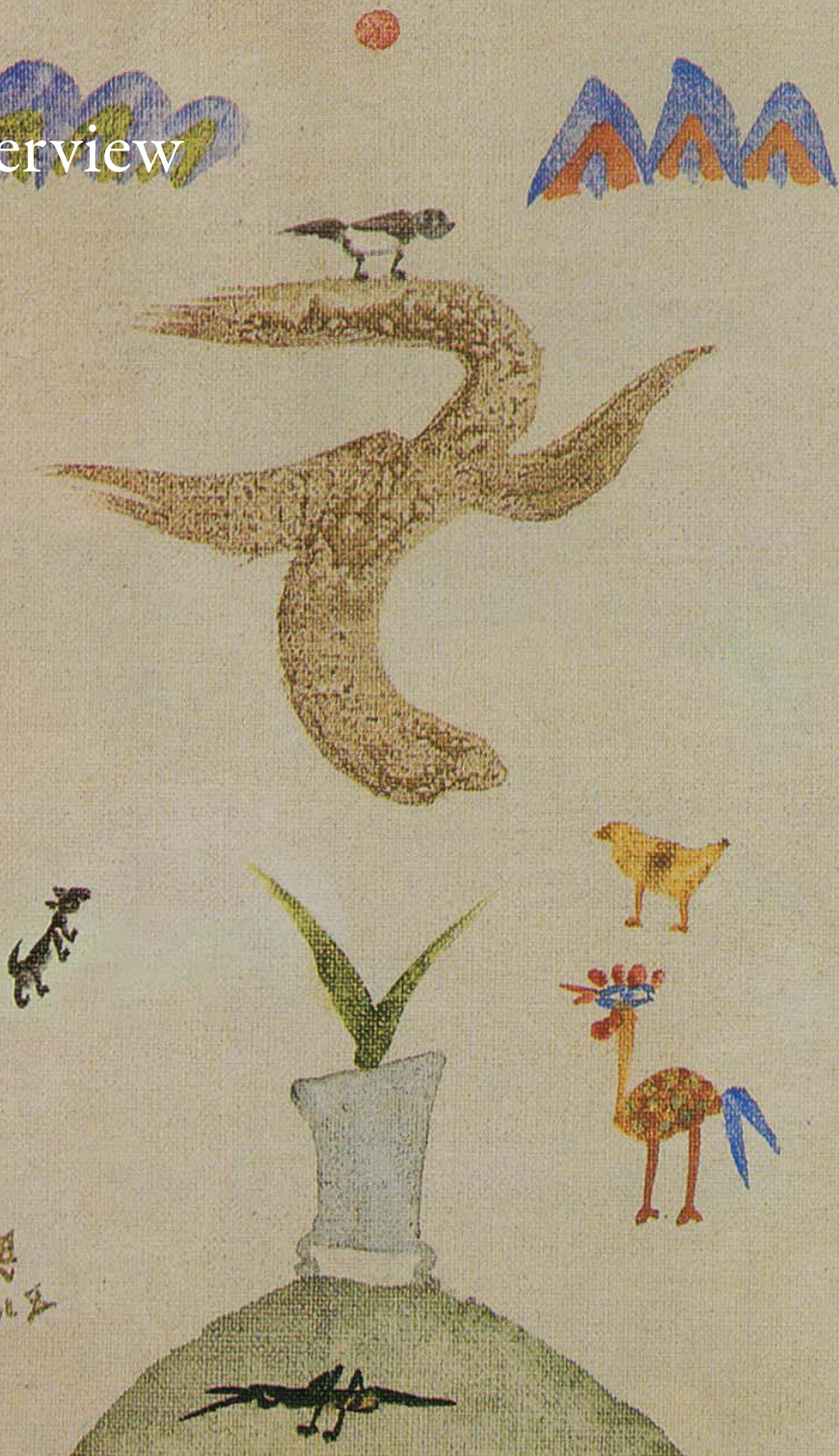
Tori Ensemble consists of three traditional Korean music performers and three free jazz performers from New York. Looking at Tori Ensemble's formation, it may appear that their music is a meeting or crossover of Eastern and Western music. But simply expressing their music as crossover or fusion does not do justice to the innovative and unique music Tori Ensemble produces.

Their music appears sometimes graceful sometimes mysterious, but their musical art is instilled with all of the archetypal emotions of humanity. When their performances finish, the audiences are always deeply moved. Although humans are breathing every day, every moment, yet they don't acknowledge the importance of breathing. Contrary to this, Tori Ensemble naturally show and emphasize the principles and aesthetics of breathing within their musical merging of Korean traditional music and free jazz. Thus, their musical breathing always sublimates existence into an art form that is evolving and deeply impressive.

In Korean dialect, the word 'tori' is a traditional musical term related to one particular Korean province. Making use of Korea's diverse traditional music, Tori Ensemble is harmonizing Eastern with Western forms, pursuing new sounds. Starting with his finger-tips on traditional stringed instruments, the master of the Korean zither (geomungo) is HEO Yoon-jeong. The low-pitched sound of the Korean zither may sound rough, but with the sound emitted and sounds in between, along with the tonal highs and lows, exactly there in this soundscape can be found the breathing of man. Joining this together with the double-headed drum (janggu), bamboo flute (daegum), cello, clarinet, saxophone and electronic drums in equal position, a wonderful ensemble is created. If spectators listen to Tori Ensemble's music, they don't need to have a thorough knowledge of Korean traditional music, nor do they need to be foreigners to fill this music to their heart's content. Neither is this music simply a meeting of Eastern and Western forms of music. Needless to say, people of all ages and countries will be able to simply feel and be moved by the beautiful range of emotions and musical forms conveyed in Tori Ensemble's repertoire.

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Overview



Three branches of Korean traditional music

Traditional Korean music is represented by the court, aristocratic, and commoners' traditions, which all existed before the 20th century. Today, however, these styles of music are often labeled together as 'traditional music.' But we should remember that each branch had its own unique history and understanding of music.

1. The court music

The present album contains little court music. However, the court tradition is an important part of Korean traditional musical culture that we still hear today. Court music features performance style, scale, tempo, and expressions that are different from those of aristocratic or folk music.

A performance group consists of a fixed number of instruments and performers who must wear appropriate clothing. A typical orchestra consists of a large and magnificent set of percussion instruments, including *pyeonjong* (chime-bell with sixteen bronze bells) and *pyeongyeong* (chime-stone with sixteen marbles). Rather than playing in a solo or duet, court music features a large orchestra. The tempo of music is slow in general but may be flexible depending on the process of the ceremony.

Traditional Korean court music is being performed by relatively conservative communities today, mostly national music centers. *Jongmyo jeryeak* (Royal Ancestral Shrine Music) for example is still being performed in traditional ceremonies, but with little interaction with a modern audience.



2. The aristocratic music for scholars

The so-called pungnyu (li. wind and stream) was considered a cultivated and elegant activity among aristocrats and scholars in the traditional society. They sought to attain 'peace of mind' and 'moral righteousness' through the musical activities of pungnyu. They developed a unique musical culture called jeongak, "proper music." Pungnyu meetings usually featured a jul pungnyu ensemble, led mostly by stringed instruments such as geomun-go and gayageum. They also played some vocal music, including gagok (classical long lyric song) and gasa (classical long narrative song). It was common to play pungnyu music on a solo instrument or to sing it with a gayageum accompaniment. Pungnyu music has a slow tempo, with the time between notes left empty except for resonant vibrations, which are considered to represent clarity and reserved beauty. This type of music was considered the emblem of meditative and learned activity for scholars and it is now being performed as a type of creative and meditative music. Da'ak (Korean Creative Music Society) and the songs by Kang Gwon-soon in this recording are in keeping with this tradition.

2-1 Instrumental music for scholars; Jul Pungnyu

Jul pungnyu is a string ensemble with the geomun-go as the leading instrument. Other stringed instruments are gayageum, haegeum, and yanggeum (dulcimer). Also included are daegeum, piri, danso, and jangu. It is called jul pungnyu (meaning 'string pungnyu') since geomun-go plays the main melody. Its counterpart would be daepungryu, another type of ensemble form, which consists only of wind instruments. Jul pungnyu music also developed for solo geomun-go, gayageum, and yanggeum. Sometimes it referred to the duet of a trio. Major repertoires for jul pungnyu are "Boheosa," "Yeomllrak," "Yeongsanhoesang," and gagok with notations for geomun-go accompaniment. For the scholars who did pungnyu,



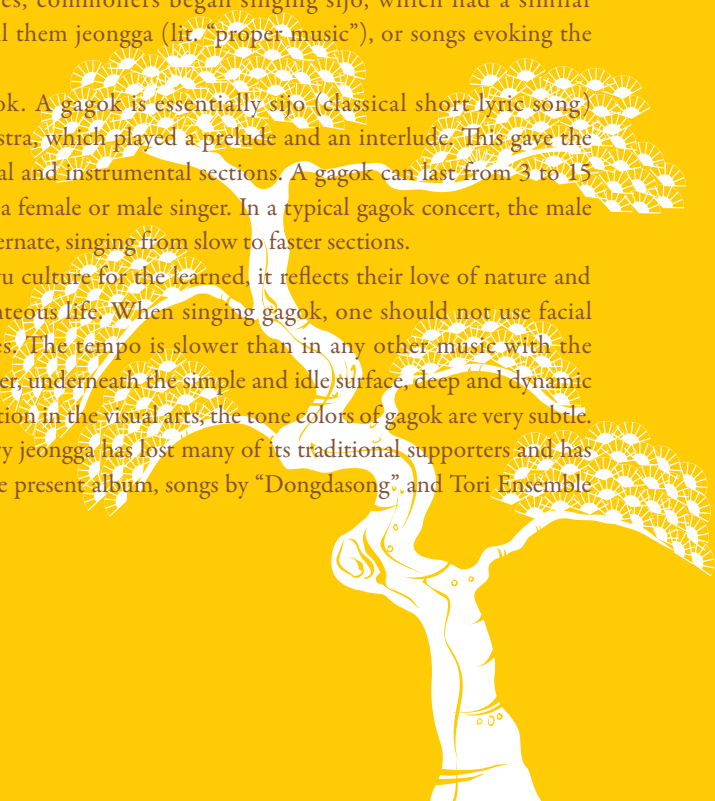
rather than creating a new piece of music, it was more important to play and re-play existing pieces with more depth. As a result, many types of variations exist for famous pieces such as “Yeongsanhoesang” and gagok. On this album, Da’ak and Tori pieces represent the tradition of jul pungnyu.

2-2 Vocal music of the scholars; Jeongga

Gagok and gasa were the most important vocal music enjoyed by traditional scholars. Influenced by these two genres, commoners began singing sijo, which had a similar atmosphere. Today Koreans call them jeongga (lit. “proper music”), or songs evoking the atmosphere of jeongga.

Most jeongga songs were gagok. A gagok is essentially sijo (classical short lyric song) accompanied by a simple orchestra, which played a prelude and an interlude. This gave the feeling of contrast between vocal and instrumental sections. A gagok can last from 3 to 15 minutes and was sung either by a female or male singer. In a typical gagok concert, the male and the female singers would alternate, singing from slow to faster sections.

Since gagok was part of pungnyu culture for the learned, it reflects their love of nature and the will to live a good and righteous life. When singing gagok, one should not use facial expressions or physical gestures. The tempo is slower than in any other music with the melody calm and sedate. However, underneath the simple and idle surface, deep and dynamic emotions are hidden. Like gradation in the visual arts, the tone colors of gagok are very subtle. However, since the 20th Century jeongga has lost many of its traditional supporters and has maintained a low profile. On the present album, songs by “Dongdasong” and Tori ensemble belong to the jeongga tradition.





3 Folk music of the commoners

Folk music, rooted in the everyday lives of the commoners, has a wide range. Aside from the local traditions, there was also vocal and instrumental music developed by professional musicians. The latter tradition is the most loved and actively performed folk music in Korea today. Modern composers have adopted it into their new compositions in order to suite the taste of present-day audiences.

Features of folk music are very different from those of court or aristocratic music. Since folk music is not bound by fixed forms or performance styles, the way it is arranged and performed can be very flexible. One or two instruments could accompany a song or a dance at any time. Instead of trying to express a philosophy or ideology, folk music expresses individual emotions and feelings. Therefore music is more direct and positive, liberally using the vibrations of strings and embellishments to express the feelings of heung (excitement), han (regret), and sinmyeong (delightfulness). Notes are heavily vibrated and they sound very dramatic. Each melodic phrase has the distinct structure of tension and resolve.

Folk musicians also emphasize the feeling of spontaneity. While maintaining a basic musical structure, they will improvise based on their feelings that change from moment to moment. They consider playing music in the same style over and over again as “photographic performance,” having no life. Folk music is also known for having many regional varieties. Just as each province has its own dialect, music sounds differ depending on the region. This is why places of origin should be specified when discussing folk songs, pungmul, or shamanist music.

3-1 Instrumental music of the commoners - sinawi, sanjo, and pungmul

Instrumental music of the commoners is represented by sinawi, derived from shamanist music, sanjo, instrumental solo, and pungmul, which combines percussive music with dance and play.

The Sinawi is instrumental music in the tradition of the shaman gut. During a gut the shaman would sing and dance, accompanied by instruments such as the piri, daegeum, haegeum, janggu, and jing. The music is basically improvisational, having regional difference in instrumentation, mode, and rhythmic patterns. Today the most famous sinawi is namdo sinawi, based on the shamanist rituals of the Namdo (Jeolla, Southern part of Korea) region. It is characterized by heavy vibrations, bending notes, and the melancholic gyemyoen mode. There is also Gyeonggi (Gyeonggi region) sinawi (folk artistic instrumental ensemble). A sinawi is improvisation of melodies loosely based on three or four rhythmic patterns. Many Koreans consider it as the quintessence of musical vitality, which is the most valued quality in folk music. "Barisinawi" performed by Baramgot featured on this recording is a modern reconstruction of sinawi.

Sanjo is the representative instrumental solo in Korean folk music. It is a highly artistic genre, in which the soloist is given the chance to show off his or her musical skill. Sanjo is called 'the flower of folk instrumental music.' In a typical sanjo, the performer would play about 50 minutes of solo, accompanied by a janggu (hourglass drum) or a buk (barrel drum). The piece consists of 5-6 rhythmic sections, which begins slowly and gets faster and faster. Melodies of sanjo are based on the ujo and the gyemyeonjo, two basic modes in Korean music. But the sanjo player could create variety in his melodies through the technique of transposition. While maintaining the basic rhythmic and melodic structure, the player would add his or her own interpretation. This can sometimes lead to creating his or her own school of sanjo. The very first sanjo was that composed for the gayageum, which then spread to other instruments: geomun-go, daegeum, haegeum, piri, and ajaeng (bowed zither). Each sanjo tradition has many different schools or styles of performance. It has developed into one of the most important fields in present-day Korean music.





Since sanjo requires a high level of skill from the performer, it has inspired many modern composers to create similar music. In this recording, we can find the spirit of sanjo in the haegeum performance of KANG Eun-il and HWANG Byung-ki's compositions.

Pungmul is the folk tradition, which perfectly combines dance and play, using kkwaenggari (small gong), jing (large gong), jangu, and buk. In the past, these instruments were sometimes called pungmul, and to play these instruments was to 'play pungmul.' This tradition continues today since the birth of the staged-version of pungmul called samulnori (percussion quartet). There exist different regional styles of pungmul. Pungmul in a traditional context was played during different times of the year, to give blessing to each household in a village society. Examples are danggut, madangbalbi, geollip gut, and dure gut. Pangut, played by professional artists, was characterized by a higher level of artistic skill than village pungmul. A pungmul would employ the taepyeongso (conical double-reed oboe) aside from the four percussive instruments mentioned above. For playing and dancing, the sogo (small hand drum) also becomes important. The tone color of drums blends well with the metallic sound of kkwaenggari and jing. Using repeated rhythmic patterns, pungmul performers could use a variety of rhythmic phrases almost endlessly, an important musical aspect of pungmul. A performance usually starts out slow but gradually becomes faster, employing the so-called 'man-jung-sak' (slow-medium-fast) form. Performers of the four major instruments coordinate their playing styles in the slow section. Then, as the tempo picks up, the music becomes more and more intense. Sometimes they would insert a slower section after a rhythmic climax, increasing the dramatic effect. Such an arrangement of tempo excites and elevates the mood of the audience as they become carried away with the music. In the pieces performed by Gong Myoung, Noreum Machi, Dulsori, and Sonagi Project, we can taste the rich world of pungmul.



3-2 Vocal music of the commoners: folk songs and pansori

Vocal music by the commoners was very colorful and diverse. It included folk songs sung by commoners in their everyday lives and *japga* (professional folk song) and *pansori* (vocal narrative singing) sung by professional singers. There was also *binari*, sung by singers in a *pungmul* band.

Folk songs in Korea are divided into different regions. There are roughly five regional styles; *Namdo minyo* (Jeolla province), *Dongbu minyo* (Gyeongsang, Kangwon provinces), *Gyeonggi minyo* (Seoul, Gyeonggi province), *Seodo minyo* (Pyeongang, Hwanghae provinces), and *Jeju minyo* (Jeju island). According to whether it is local or widely known by professional artists, a song is either *tosok* (or *hyangto*, local) *minyo* or *tongsok* (professional) *minyo*. A song may be categorized according to its context, such as work, entertainment, or a religious ceremony. A folk song is in a call-and-response form. One caller would sing the first phrase, which is then responded to by a group of people. The words for the songs reflect the emotions and feelings of the ordinary commoners. Folk songs are simple and directly reflect the dynamic emotions of the common people.

Today, only a few songs are being transmitted by a limited number of people, who are designated as Intangible Treasure holders. There is also *tongsok minyo*, sung by professional singers, but they have lost contact with their grass roots. Today many singers devoted to traditional music endeavor to re-construct old folk songs. “Heyya” by KANG Eun-il HaegumPlus and “Binari” by Noreum Machi are examples of such attempts.

Pansori is vocal drama in which a singer (called *sori gwangdae*) sings, speaks, and uses physical gestures to deliver a long story. He is helped by a drummer (*gosu*), who sits next to the singer and offers *chuimsae* (vocal encouragement). *Pansori* originated from Namdo province. After a long history of transmission carried by numerous master singers, *pansori* has reached a high

artistic level with complex formal structure and deep expressivity.

A pansori singer makes use of various musical elements including changes in modes, singing style, and embellishments. This is combined with his acting skills and physical gestures, allowing the audience to hear and see at the same time. The audience, while listening to the singer perform, would imagine in their heads the scenes and situations being described. A pansori performance can be made up of either the entire story or a section from the story. The former is called wanchang, while the latter is called domak sori. A wanchang may last from three to eight hours.

There were many pansori in the past. Today we have only five remaining forms. They are: “Chunhyangga (The Song of Chunhyang),” “Simcheongga (The Song of Sim Cheong),” “Heungboga (The Song of Heungbo),” “Sugungga (The Song of Underwater Palace),” and “Jeokbyeokga (The Song of the Red Cliff).” They are called the five grounds (madang) or five batang of pansori.

A master singer may, in his hometown or place of activity, create his own school. Pansori was loved by many since its birth in the 18th Century and was designated as National Intangible Property No.5 in 1964 by the Korean government. It was also chosen as ‘the Intangible Cultural Property of Humanity’ by UNESCO in 2003. The songs by Ahn Sook-sun, Yi Jaram and Chae Su-jeong contained in this recording are modern attempts at a cross-over and text change. Similar experiments are being made with pansori today.



Traditional religion and music of Korea



Besides the music discussed so far, there is religious music: shaman rituals, as the fountain of Korean culture, Buddhist music, which exerted much influence since the importation of Buddhism, and Confucian music, which was widely spread to all East Asian countries. Although religious traditions are becoming less and less important to modern Koreans, we should remember that they were the very source of artistic inspiration in Korean music. They are being re-constructed today through various routes. Since Shamanism and Buddhism have long been intimately connected with the lives of the people, we categorize them under the label folk tradition, while Confucian ritual music is considered as a court ceremony. However, we should understand that each religious music form uses its own unique instrumentation, dance, and singing style. Therefore, it deserves separate attention.

1. Music of the shamans

The music of musok (shaman rituals) includes not only the songs by shamans but also the accompaniment, acoustic effects, and independent instrumental pieces related to gut. They were performed either as a religious ritual or for entertainment. A gut is hosted by the shaman, his assistant, and instrumentalists playing accompaniment. The shaman performs most of the songs and dances and his assistant will sing responsive songs, assist dancing, or play on the jangu. The rest of the instrumentalists will play accompaniment. How instruments are organized differs according to region, place, and occasion. A typical ensemble is made up of percussive instruments, with only one or two melodic instruments. The result is great complexity in rhythmic variation. The music is improvisational and



flexible, and many scholars consider gut music as the origins of Korean folk music. They see it as representing spiritual liveliness and spontaneity. The rhythmic variations featured by Baramgot and Noreum Machi in this recording reflect such a tradition.

2. Buddhist music

A very special type of music exists in the Buddhist rituals of Korea. Beompae is monophonic singing with no fixed rhythm or harmony. Its origin is found in India and has been transmitted to Central Asia and China through the monks. Jitsori represents an ancient Indian musical tradition. Hotsori is based on Chinese fixed poeties and anchaebi sori is based on Buddhist chanting in a free form. There is also the instructive song for the populace called hwacheong. In a typical beompae performance, a metallic gong will accompany melismatic singing of the monks. Jitsori's singing style, with its free rhythm and the extended notes, has exerted great influence upon all Korean traditional music. Therefore jitsori is considered, together with gagok and pansori, as the three most important vocal genres in Korean music. Beompae has now become a stranger to most Korean young people. However, it continues to give great inspiration to many dancers, musicians, and actors. Be-Being's music in this recording is an attempt to re-construct beompae.

SONG Hye-jin

(Professor, Graduate School of Korean Traditional Culture, Sookmyung Women's University)

Directory



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Culture&Tourism Festival,
1000 Yeonsan5-dong, Yeonje-gu,
Busan, 611-735, South-Korea
Tel: +82 51 888 3392~7
E-mail: trgv@naver.com
Web: www.rockfestival.co.kr
Artform: Mainly rock, pop, funk

Incheon Pentaport Rock Festival 24-26 July 2009

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Seoul, 150-889, South-Korea
Tel: +82 2 783 0114
E-mail: 09pentaport@gmail.com
Web: www.pentaportrock.com
Artform: Mainly rock, pop, dj

Jarasum International Jazz Festival 15-18 October 2009

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432 Uepne-ri, Gapyeong-uep, Gapyeong-gun,
Gyeonggi-do, 477-805, South-Korea
Tel: +82 31 581 2813~4
E-mail: jarasumjazz@hanmail.net
Web: www.jarasumjazz.com
Artform: Mainly Jazz, world music

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Tel: +82 2 3444 9969
E-mail: vallyrock@naver.com
Web: www.valleyrockfestival.com
Artform: Mainly rock, pop, dj

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1F Conference Hall,
San1-1, Duckjin-Dong,
Duckjin-Gu, Jeon-ju,

Jeon-buk, 561-807, South-Korea
Tel: +82 63 232 8398
E-mail: sori@sorifestival.com
Web: www.sorifestival.com
*Artform: Mainly Korean traditional music,
world music*

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Seoul, 121-836, South-Korea
Tel: +82 2 3141 1011
E-mail: 21crpm@hanmail.net
Web: www.worlddjfest.co.kr
Artform: Mainly dj, rock, pop

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2F Festival House,
28, Docheon-Dong, Tongyeong,
Gyeongnam, 650-110, South-Korea
Tel: +82 55 645 2137
E-mail: webmaster@timf.org
Web: www.timf.org
Artform: Mainly classical music

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518-7, Dal-dong, Nam-gu,
Ulsan, 618-716, South-Korea
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E-mail: info@cheoyong.or.kr
Web: www.cheoyong.or.kr
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ARTS CENTER

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E-mail: ansanca@iansan.net
Web: www.ansanart.com
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ChungMu Arts Hall

131 Heungin-dong, Jung-gu,
Seoul, 100-880, South-Korea
Tel: +82 2 2230 6600

Web: www.cmah.or.kr

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Geoje, 656-910, South-Korea
Tel: +82 55 680 1000

E-mail: mcmx@lycos.co.kr

Web: www.geojeart.or.kr

Capacity: large theater 1026, medium theater 434

Other information: exhibition hall

Goyang Aram Nuri /Oulim Nuri

[Aram Nuri] 777 Sungsa-dong, DukYang-gu,
GoyangGyunggi-do, 412-020, South-Korea

[Oulim Nuri] 816 Madu-dong, Ilsan Dong-gu,
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Tel: +82 31 960 0010/+82 31 960 0015

E-mail: nomade@artgy.or.kr

Web: www.artgy.or.kr

Capacity: [Aram Nuri] opera house 1887, concert hall 1449, small hall 300 [Oulim Nuri] large theater 1218, medium theater 366

Other information: [Aram Nuri] exhibition hall, outdoor stage, [Oulim Nuri] exhibition hall, outdoor stage

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E-mail: ligarthall@lig.co.kr

Web: www.ligarthall.com

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SAC(Seoul Arts Center)

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Tel: +82 2 580 1301

E-mail: webmaster@sac.or.kr

Web: www.sac.or.kr

Capacity: opera theater 2278, towol theater 675, small theater 300-400, concert hall 2600, recital hall 380

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Web: www.sejongpac.or.kr

Capacity: grand hall 3022, medium theater 630, chamber hall 443

Other information: exhibition hall, museum, outdoor stage ; residence company: Seoul Orchestra

SNART(SeongNam Arts Center)

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Gyeonggi-do, 463-839, South-Korea

Tel: +82 31 783 8000

E-mail: webmaster@snart.or.kr

Web: www.snart.or.kr

Capacity: Opera house 1804, Concert hall 994, ensemble theater 378

Other information: exhibition hall, conference hall, outdoor stage

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Web: www.uac.or.kr
Capacity: large hall 1025, small hall 237
Other information: exhibition hall, conference
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Web: www.ntok.go.kr

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into the light
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