

# **K-CLASSICS**

**KOREAN CULTURE NO. 4**

**K-Classics: A New Presence on the World's Musical Stage**

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# K-CLASSICS

*A New Presence on the World's Musical Stage*



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*“Korean musicians scooped five prizes, claiming vocal, piano and violin awards, at the 14th International Tchaikovsky Competition in Moscow, Russia.... This is an exceptional year for Korean artists, winning five awards at a single international music competition.”*

Kwon Mee-yoo, *The Korea Times*, 1 July 2011

*“[In Belgium] we call that the ‘Korean mystery.’ So we want to solve that mystery. And to know why suddenly there is an uprising like that. It’s like a landslide.”*

Thierry Loreau, music advisor,  
RTBF (Belgian Francophone public broadcaster)

*“Unsuk Chin has been the Seoul Philharmonic’s composer-in-residence for five years now, and seems to be their secret weapon.... It was Chin’s briefer, punchier, and deeply original soundworld that showed them [the orchestra] off best.”*

Kate Molleson, *The Guardian*, 25 August 2011



## PROLOGUE

Whenever someone is talking about the characteristics of 20th and 21st century culture, the words “diversity” and “popularity” keep popping up. We have long since come to view culture and arts as “industries,” and as popular culture has assumed pride of place, pure art has sometimes been dismissed as culture for a small minority. But popular culture has a hard time flourishing without a foundation in pure art that traces its history back into the past. That art provides the roots, and solid roots lead to richer and sweeter fruits of popular culture.

Recent years have seen Korea’s television dramas capturing the hearts of people all over the world, a phenomenon described as the “Korean Wave.” Korea’s popular music, or “K-Pop,” has similarly enjoyed great popularity with overseas audiences. While all this has been going on, however, Korea’s young classical musicians have been every bit as active on the world’s stages as the K-Pop singers; they simply receive a bit less attention, a bit less discussion, owing to the relative sizes of the “industries.” For example, Koreans claimed first place honors in the male and female vocal categories at the 2011 International Tchaikovsky Competition, second and third place in the piano category, and third place in the violin category—a total of five musicians honored for their outstanding performances. A Korean soprano also took first prize in the vocal category of the Queen Elisabeth



Vocalists Park Jong-min and Seo Sun-young, pianists Son Yeol-eum and Cho Seong-jin, and violinist Lee Jehye

### Competition in Belgium.

Korean classical music has grown tremendously over a very short period. The first generation of musicians, the ones who studied music while taking refuge in Busan during the Korean War in the 1950s, grew up to establish music colleges all over the country and teach music to younger students. Those students, who could be said to represent the second generation of Korean classical music, went overseas in droves in the 1970s and 1980s to hone their craft. Now, the students they taught upon their return are venturing onto the world's stages with skills they learned and developed at home in Korea.

Overseas performing arts specialists all ask the same question: how do these young Korean music students learn what they know? The many overseas musicians who come to Korea are similarly astonished to see younger Koreans filling the seats at performance venues. To them, Korea is a fascinating place boasting young and talented performers as well as a youthful and passionate audience. As the stars that lit up the world classical music stage in the postwar era began to fade away one by one, the global music industry demanded new faces and new ears. Korean classical music today is an inspirational answer to that call.

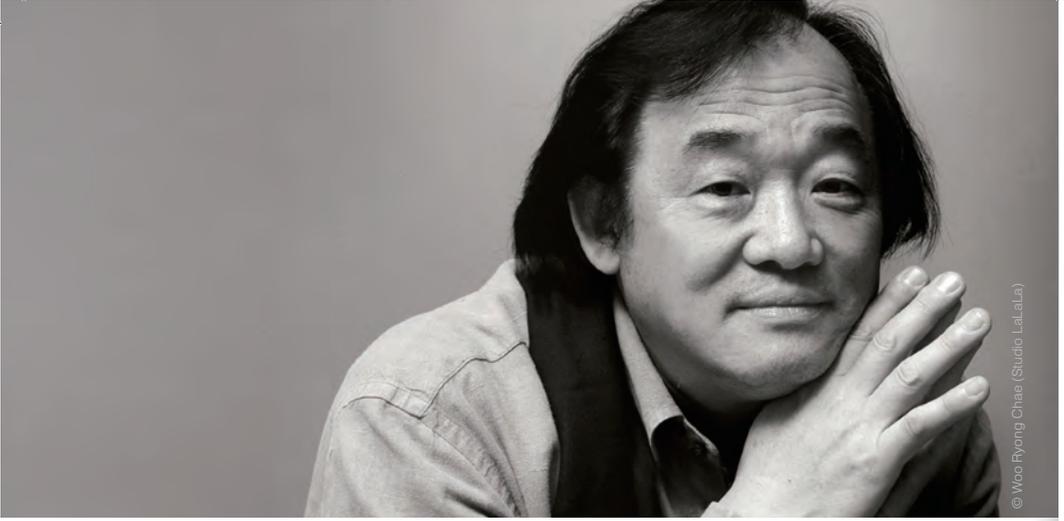
In the following pages, we will be introducing you to a Korean classical

music world that is still developing, and thus still young. You will meet three leading musicians who have represented the country on the world stage, as well as a history of the Korean encounters with Western music that shaped them. In the section on “Korean Performers,” we will be introducing you to noteworthy musicians in various areas. We will also be introducing you to some of the orchestras that have been popping up in cities all over Korea and providing a description of the country’s music education infrastructure. Finally, we will be presenting Korea’s major performance venues—places where every music lover should go when visiting Korea.

Korean classical music, or “K-Classics,” is a young field. It is a youth that has the power to infuse a contemporary quality into classical music, rescuing it from its status as a simple museum piece. The book you are about to read is an introduction to the young world of “K-Classics,” a world that already has people dreaming of the future in store for world classical music.



Pianists Kim Jun-hee, Paik Kun-woo, Kim Tae-hyung and Kim Sun-wook



© Woo Byong Chae (Studio Lalala)



© Young-Jun Kim



© Jean-François Leclercq

## Chapter One

# KOREA'S MASTERS

**B**efore presenting Korea's up-and-coming classical musicians, we would like to introduce you to three illustrious performers who have already accomplished great things on the global stage. Conductor Chung Myung-whun has used his experience with the world's top orchestras to lift the Seoul Philharmonic Orchestra to an international standard as its principal conductor. Pianist Paik Kun-woo is famous for an expansive performing career, primarily on the stages of Europe, which has seen him offering unique interpretations of the works of many different composers. And soprano Sumi Jo, praised by Herbert von Karajan for her divine voice, has dazzled audiences at an international level. After retracing their musical journeys in Chapter One, we will take a look back at the history of Western music in Korea from its origins in the Joseon era, glimpsing how classical music set down roots in Korea over the brief period of a century.



# Conductor Chung Myung-whun

## A Beautiful and Intense Journey in Time

There are certain questions that figure into every interview with a musician who has accomplished big and great things. “How did you get started in music?” the interviewer asks, or “What kind of child were you?” Those early beginnings may pale beside the individual’s accomplishments today, but we are forever curious about their “first moments” because they let us discover something far closer to the essence of things. Of course, this is not true only for famous or great people. Even very ordinary people obviously had their beginnings as the unpolished gemstones, the tiny seeds, the glints of light that would make them what they are today.

### Beginning as a Pianist

Such a moment happened in the life of conductor Chung Myung-whun. In his case, the “first moment” came with the piano. Born in Seoul in 1953,

Chung began playing the piano when he was five years old. Two years later, he was stunning audiences playing with the Seoul Philharmonic Orchestra at the age of seven. His piano skills continued to develop with each passing day. In 1961, the nine-year-old Myung-whun traveled with his older sisters Myung-wha and Kyung-wha to the US, where they would continue their musical studies. Soon, the young Myung-whun was drawing rave reviews performing with the Seattle Symphony. While a student at a Seattle high school, he trained himself physically by playing American football while continuing to dedicate himself to his piano studies. Later, he would move to New York and study at the Juilliard School of Music.

When Chung was 21 years old, something happened that neither he nor his home country would ever

forget: he placed second in the 1974 Tchaikovsky Competition, held behind the Iron Curtain in the Soviet Union. Korea afforded him the welcome of a victorious general, holding a celebratory parade in Seoul's squares. It was the first such celebration in Korea for an achievement by a classical musician.

Chung began coming to the attention of international audiences around this time. Not long after, he and his sisters were presented to the world in a BBC performance recorded at the British network's

Chung Trio: Chung Myung-whun, Myung-wha, and Kyung-wha (clockwise)



Chung is artistic director of the Seoul Philharmonic Orchestra.



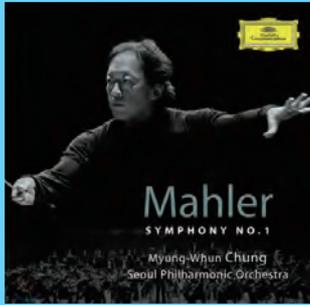
studios. At the time, Chung was active as a pianist; his sister Kyung-wha would go on to release a Decca recording of Tchaikovsky's Piano Concerto No. 1 with the London Symphony Orchestra under conductor André Previn.

### **Career as a Conductor**

It was in the late 1970s that Chung Myung-whun's conducting career truly began. Having majored in conducting while at Juilliard, he went to work in 1979 assisting Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra musical director Carlo Maria Giulini; two years later, he would

become the orchestra's deputy conductor. Chung would go on to work as chief conductor with the Saarbrücken Radio Symphony Orchestra (1984–1990), senior guest conductor for the Teatro Comunale in Florence (1987–1992), and musical director at the Opéra Bastille in Paris (1989–1994). Between 1997 and 2005, he was senior conductor for the Orchestra dell'Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia in Rome. And since 2000, he has served as musical director for the Radio France Philharmonic Orchestra.

Active in Asia as well as Europe, Chung has been musical director for the Asia Philharmonic Orchestra since 1997 and was a special artistic adviser for the Tokyo Philharmonic Orchestra from 2001 to 2010. Since 2006, he



Mahler: *Symphony No. 1*  
by the Seoul Philharmonic  
Orchestra, 2011  
Verdi: *Otello*, 1994  
Shostokovich: *Lady  
Macbeth of Mtsensk*, 1994  
Olivier Messiaen: *Quartet  
for the End of Time*, 2001



has been artistic director for the Seoul Philharmonic Orchestra, where he has spearheaded bold structural improvements that have had a major impact for the Korean music world.

No discussion of Chung would be complete without mention of his prolific recording career. Since 1990, he has recorded over 20 discs for Deutsche Grammophon, among which recordings of works by Messiaen (who dedicated his *Concert à Quatre* to Chung), Berlioz' *Symphonie Fantastique*, Rossini's *Stabat Mater*, Rimsky-Korsakov's *Scheherazade*, Verdi's *Otello*, and Shostokovich's *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk* are still regarded today as some of the best around.

Chung recently added another noteworthy achievement to his career history. In April 2011, the Seoul Philharmonic Orchestra signed a five-year contract with Universal Music. With this, Chung and the orchestra are to release two discs a year on the Deutsche Grammophon label. The following summer saw the first disc, containing recordings of Debussy's

*La Mer* and Ravel's *La Valse*. This was followed by a second disc in autumn with a recording of Mahler's Symphony No. 1.

The following is an excerpt from a 2008 interview of Chung by the monthly edition of *Gaeksuk (Auditorium)*. In it, the conductor was asked the same questions that he had answered in a previous interview 24 years earlier in 1984. Since these responses are now three years old, they may

### Interview of Chung by the music monthly *Gaeksuk (Auditorium)* in 1984 and 2008



#### **What is your exact affiliation right now?**

**1984:** I'm musical director and chief conductor for the Saarbrücken Radio Symphony Orchestra. But I only work about ten weeks out of the year.

**2008:** Since May 2000, I've been musical director and chief conductor for the Radio France Philharmonic Orchestra. Since April 2001, I've been a special artistic adviser for the Tokyo Philharmonic Orchestra. I worked with the Seoul Philharmonic Orchestra as artistic adviser in 2005, and since 2006 I've been the artistic director and chief conductor there.

#### **What is your dream as a musician?**

**1984:** I'd like to be the conductor who gives the world's most brilliant performances of Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, Brahms, and Dvořák.

**2008:** I'm so grateful to be living the life I am as a musician that you could say I've been

well have become his past thoughts, but they are being presented here because they allow for some sense of the past and present of a musician who has maintained an active enough career to defy the passage of years. Let's travel back with him on a journey into the beautiful and intense years of his past.

spending every day in a dream. Now I'd like to find something more valuable to do with music. I'd like to be able to help people with it.

#### **Do you have any other dream?**

**1984:** What I wanted from an early age, and what all of my siblings want to do, is to work for the sake of the Korean music world. We're looking right now to see what the best course would be.

**2008:** This may be an extension of my response to the last question, but I'd like to work as a Korean for the well-being of the world, for the planet we live on. In that sense, I've become very interested in environmental issues lately.

#### **When do you think it will happen?**

**1984:** Not any time soon. I still have a lot of studying to do. I have to develop myself before I can do much for Korean music. My thought right now is that it may be possible in four to five years—two or three years at the earliest. I plan to continue on as both a pianist and conductor, but I'll be giving more to conducting.

**2008:** It's always tough to say things conclusively. I'd like my hard work to help people a little bit at a time.



## Pianist Paik Kun-Woo

© Woo Ryong Chae Studio LaLala

### I Believe in Music

In the fall of 2011, pianist Paik Kun-woo gave piano performances in various small island villages in Korea. Locals who had a hard time encountering performances of classical music were given an unexpected, pleasant opportunity to welcome a master. When asked why he was giving these performances for island villages, Paik said it had to do with his feelings about his own home. “It started with an impulse to reacquaint myself with Korea,” he said. “As time goes by, people tend to seek out their home. I’ve traveled around Korea giving many performances, but

I've found myself wanting to go a bit deeper. And because music is my language, I'd like to have a dialogue with the people there through music."

### **Continued Journeys into Music**

Born in Seoul in 1946, Paik graduated from Pai Chai Middle School before traveling to the US in 1961 and studying at the Juilliard School of Music. In 1969, he won the Ferruccio Busoni International Piano Competition. He made his debut in New York playing the complete piano works of Ravel in 1972, when he was 26 years old. Around the time he was starting to draw international attention, Paik decided to travel to Europe and make a home for himself in Paris. Thus, he spent his twenties in the US and the years since in Paris.

Paik Kun-woo's life has been a series of journeys. Paik has previously told the media that he does not find his concert tours as something rigorous, or even as work. Indeed, this man, who has been to about as many destinations as a professional traveler, often had the giddy look of

Paik Kun-woo  
holding a concert  
on a small island  
in North Jeolla  
Province in Korea



a young child when reminiscing over his journeys. What does an “island” mean to him? “Something remote . . . distant . . . dreamlike.”

His music has always been open, but a look at his work over the past few years shows nothing that can simply be “enjoyed” casually. Paik has always been serious in this way. His repertoire is vast, ranging from Bach to Stockhausen, Busoni to Scriabin, Liszt to Messiaen. His recent performances include one major feat—playing the complete piano sonatas of Beethoven over a single week in 2007—as well as 2006 performance of Penderencki’s *Resurrection* piano concerto with the KBS Symphony Orchestra, with the composer himself conducting. This latter piece is one that contains within it a drive toward peace, a will to triumph and a refusal to bow in the face of the complexities and abnormalities of the society in which we live. In 2008, the year after Paik played the complete repertoire of Beethoven’s sonatas, he gave a performance of Messiaen’s *Vingt regards sur l’enfant-Jésus* for the centennial anniversary of the composer’s birth. A 2011 concert of works by Liszt to mark the bicentennial anniversary of the composer’s birth focused on pieces related to literature and work from his later period. It was an authoritative and poised performance that captured every aspect of these pieces: the refuge taken in religion, and the old man’s solitary yearning for his home country.

The world was clamoring for Liszt in the bicentennial year of 2011, but Paik Kun-woo had focused on this particular musical world long before, in Paris. Chancing to hear performances of Liszt’s *Totentanz* and *Malédiction* on the radio, Paik found them having a greater impact on him that day than ever before. “Why did Liszt write such music?” he wondered. It was a question that would develop into an even more fundamental query: “Why did Liszt write music at all?” The more he delved into Liszt, the more

Paik became aware of how little he knew of the great Hungarian composer. Liszt's work for the piano includes over 600 known pieces, but even this cannot be called his complete oeuvre; new works are still being discovered even today. Some works that are fairly well known today were



"Paik Kun-woo and Liszt" concert took place in June 2011 at Seoul Arts Center.

difficult to locate a score for three decades ago when Paik became enamored of Liszt. The pianist spent several years attempting to get his hands on the desired music, which he divided up into programs for performances of differing character. In 1982, he gave six concerts in Paris doing only the work of Franz Liszt—over fifty pieces.

This committed spirit of exploration is evident not only on the stage but in Paik's discography as well. He has recorded the complete piano works of Scriabin, Liszt, and Mussorgsky, as well as all of Rachmaninoff's and Prokofiev's piano concertos. In 2002, he dedicated himself to the works of Bach and Busoni; in 2001, to Fauré; in 2003, to the complete concertos



Paik discography is filled with the complete oeuvres of many composers.

of Chopin. In 2005, he began recording performances of Beethoven's 32 sonatas. The complete works, finished in 2007, were released on the Decca label.

### **Pursuing a Broader World**

What does the recording of a composer's complete oeuvre mean to Paik?

"I think that understanding a world requires 'temporal space,'" he explained. "In that sense, recording an artist's complete works represents a method of approach. It cannot be a goal in and of itself. For a performer, it is important to pursue a broader world, and as you get older it naturally converges on a certain course. In art, there is no such thing as 'complete' or 'perfect.' That may be why I still spend all day in front of the piano like this. How wonderful it is that we can share in this wonderful world



together. Brahms is supposed to have said that: how happy he was to be doing what he loved.”

Let us return to the start of the story and Paik’s series of island village concerts. When asked whether the works of Debussy and Liszt that he performed there might come across as somewhat inaccessible to first-time listeners, Paik said, “That’s the performer’s responsibility.”

“The biggest issue for a performer is whether they can win the audience over with their music,” he explained. “Music is not something you feel because of education. My belief is that when a performer properly interprets and performs the music, then everyone can understand it.”

Music that is serious, yet seeks to open hearts and go inside. The ultimate meeting of two differing directions—made possible by the music in which Paik Kun-woo professes his belief.



© Woo Ryong Chee (Studio Lalala)

## A History of Classical Music in Korea Part I



Franz Eckert

Before the Republic of Korea came into being, the country was known as Joseon. The opening of its ports in 1876 brought with it an influx of Western culture into the Korean Peninsula, and Western music was one of the things introduced to the country. The history of the early introduction of Western musical styles was one of instruction and performance in vocal and instrumental music by foreigners. Representative examples of this are the hymns taught by American missionaries and the Western ensemble established by Germany's Franz Eckert (1852–1916).

Initially, Christian missionaries visiting Korea during the Enlightenment period shared hymns for worship, which would play an important part in Western music setting down roots on the peninsula. With the creation of Eckert's ensemble in 1901, the training of performers for it would lead to a further spread of Western musical styles. That group would serve as a cradle for the development of Western instrumental music in Korea. After Eckert's death, member Baek Woo-yong (1894–1925) assembled the scattered members into the Gyeongseong Band, contributing to carrying on and spreading Western music through the composition and performance of popular and film music.

### Colonial Period (1910–1945)

In 1910, Joseon became a colony of Japan following an invasion and the signing of the Japan-Korea Annexation Treaty, with its unequal terms. The following years would see an influx of Japanese military songs composed in the Western style (Japan had incorporated Western culture and music earlier than Korea). Western music was also taught in Western-style educational institutions. This was a period that saw the emergence of professional musicians who had studied Western music in Japan, among them performers, composers, critics, and music teachers.

Specialized music education institutions and Western musical groups would become more active after the end of the colonial period. Korea's first private music education institution was the Korean Court Music Study Institute. Established in 1909, it had departments for Korean music and Western music, the latter teaching organ, violin, and Western music theory and graduating a wide range of musicians. One of these was Hong Nan-pa, who composed such representative Korean works of music as "Bongseonwha (Garden Balsam)."

A music department was subsequently established at Ewha Women's Professional School (today's Ewha Womans University) in 1925, and extracurricular band, chorus, ensemble, and orchestra music departments were instituted in 1918 at Yonhi College (today's Yonsei University).

Against this background, groups were actively performing Western music. Orchestras began to be formed around 1926, with specialized ensembles like the Central Friends of Music Society (Jungang Aguhoe, 1926), the Keijō Imperial University Orchestra (1928), the Yonhi College Orchestra (192), Gyeongseong Orchestra (1934), Gyeongseong Radio Orchestra (1936) and Joseon Symphony Orchestra (1940) spearheading the development of musical culture. The emergence of such professional musicians as Baek Woo-yong, Kim In-sik, Lee Sang-jun, Jeong Sa-in, and Hong Nan-pa ushered in a new era in the history of Western music in Korea. Applying Western musical techniques, the composers were prolific in producing vocal and instrumental



Hong Nan-pa

compositions including arias, children's music, and popular songs. These orchestras and composers would make a significant contribution to the spread of Western music.

## Liberation from Japan & Korean War (1945–1957)

The Korean Peninsula was liberated from Japanese rule on Aug. 15, 1945, but it would subsequently be divided into North and South in 1948 and erupt into the Korean War on June 25, 1950. Many musicians disappeared or died during the war. The 1950s saw every ensemble working to fill the gaps created by the war and preparing for another leap forward. An already weakened base after liberation had collapsed completely with the conflict, so efforts were made to reestablish the musical ensembles and actively incorporate world-class compositions through exchanges with the music's countries of origin in the West. Active discussions were also held to seek out a direction for the Korean music world. Performers in particular were noticeably more active than other areas after the war, distinguishing themselves by playing in groups of a kind rather than individually. The predecessor of today's Seoul Philharmonic was the Navy Information and Education Band, which was established in 1951 during the Korean War. After the war ended, this ensemble began anew in 1957 as the Seoul Philharmonic. The Army Orchestra that had been formed in 1950 was likewise relaunched after the war in 1956 as the KBS Symphony Orchestra.



## Soprano Sumi Jo

### The Indisputable Queen of the Night

Born in Seoul in 1962, Sumi Jo showed great talent at a young age, learning vocals, dancing, piano, and the *gayageum*, a traditional Korean 12-string zither. Every day, her mother would play recordings of Maria Callas and Joan Sutherland at home. Unable to understand a word they were saying, the young Sumi merely mimicked their sounds, but she was nonetheless able to learn—however unconsciously—a musical style that was hers alone.

“When I was recording my first solo record, *Carnavall*, with Richard

Bonyge, the reason I felt so comfortable with the maestro, as though he was just the man next door, was because I had seen his face on all those album covers ever since I was a little girl,” she recalled in 2011, the 25th anniversary of her international debut.

### **The Divine Voice**

The soprano studied vocals at the Sun Hwa Arts Middle and High Schools and the Seoul National University College of Music before departing in 1983 for Italy and the Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia. Two years later, she won the Zonta International Competition in Naples, an honor she would follow upon with triumphs at the 1986 Francisco Viñas International Singing Competition in Barcelona, the Pretoria International Singing Competition in South Africa, and the Verona International Singing Competition in Italy. Basing herself in Italy, she steadily worked to establish a springboard for an international career.

Jo's 25th debut anniversary concert was held at the outdoor stage in Olympic Park with Joseph Calleja, Steven Mercurio, and Richard Yongjae O'Neill.



Her formal international debut came in 1986 when she sang the part of Gilda in a performance of *Rigoletto* at the Teatro Lirico Giuseppe Verdi in Trieste. How many Koreans were aware of her at the time? Back home, there were only vague rumors that a Japanese soprano named “Sumijo” was a new force on the European stage. The musical “time lag” between Europe and Korea was a world away from what we see today.

It was around the time of the 1988 Olympics in Seoul that Korean audiences first became aware of Jo. In particular, a 1993 recital back home would trigger a “Sumi Jo mania.” That summer, she appeared singing the role of the Queen of the Night in *The Magic Flute* at the Salzburg Festival—a stage she had previously made her debut on in 1989.

The year 1988 saw a crucial turning point in Jo’s opera career, one that would take her to the very top of the field. This was none other than her meeting with Herbert von Karajan. She was invited to audition, with the legendary Austrian conductor praising her for her “divine voice,” and in 1989 she would have the opportunity to make her debut in Salzburg.



“For my Salzburg debut, I played the part of Oscar in Verdi’s *Un Ballo in Maschera*,” Jo recalled. “For me, it was a great joy, but at the same time a sad experience. Karajan passed away a week before the performance, and Sir [Georg] Solti served as conductor in his stead. I had to hold back the tears as I sang. After that day, my memories of Salzburg were often depressing ones, like the days and days of rain. Even when I went back to Salzburg in 1993 as the Queen of the Night, I was constantly suffering from a cold because of the weather there—it would get very cold when it rained. So I had to rehearse that difficult part under less than the best of conditions. On top of that, I had a crown weighing over three kilograms, a costume that was like a Christmas tree, and that stage makeup, all of which made it very trying for me. But do you know what the hardest part was? The orchestra’s ‘A’ was 444 Hz, higher than the ordinary 440 Hz. When I sang the high F, I actually had to sing it like an F-sharp. I remember that being extremely difficult for me.”



The role of the Queen of the Night may have left Jo with nightmares even as it brought her glory, but few would dispute her performance of the part as being the best of this era. Surely, she must have tired of or felt weighed down by such titles as “Queen of the Night” or “Queen of Coloratura” (the title of a Decca recording). Did she ever manage to escape the specter of the queen? An answer may be found in her reply to a question about what coloratura means to her: “Not sleeping.”

“Not all of the songs in the coloratura range leave me unable to sleep,” she said, “but with the Queen of the Night in particular, I often slept poorly when I had to sing that part. It’s a role that requires perfection, both musically and in terms of the character of the role. With the difficulty of the technique, the control of emotions, the tension and weight of the part, there is no margin for error at all. It was the kind of performance that affects both body and mind, and so it left me unable to sleep. Now that I’ve been performing for 25 years, it isn’t often that I feel so tense that I can’t sleep well before a performance at a venue like an opera theater or concert hall.”



Jo signed a five-year contract with Universal Music in 2007.



Jo's first solo album, *Carnaval!* (1994)  
 Grammy Award winning recording of *Die Frau ohne Schatten* (1993)  
 25th debut anniversary album *Libera* (2011)

## Prolific Recording Career

In addition to her work on the world's concert and opera stages, Sumi Jo has also had a prolific recording career. She recorded several times with the Academy of St. Martin in the Fields under conductor Neville Marriner for the Decca label, and she also sang on a Deutsche Grammophon recording of a symphony by Mahler with the Philharmonia Orchestra and Chorus under Giuseppe Sinopoli. Various other titles on the Decca and Erato labels have met with strong responses as well. In particular, a 1993 recording of the Richard Strauss opera *Die Frau ohne Schatten* with Georg Solti and the Vienna Philharmonic was honored with a Grammy Award. Jo signed a five-year contract with Universal Music in 2007, which has led to the release of several Deutsche Grammophon recordings capturing different aspects of the soprano. As part of this series, she released the September 2011 disc *Libera* to mark the 25th anniversary of her international debut.

Sumi Jo: a coloratura soprano who will go down as the eternal Queen of the Night. It is a fact neither she nor we can deny.

# A History of Western Music in Korea Part II

## Study Abroad (1950s–1960s)

The Korean music world entered its next stage of development through the influence of the US military, which had arrived to help rebuild the country amid the devastation of war. The pianist Han Tong-il made his start against this societal background, coming to attention on the international stage after traveling to the US to study music. After claiming honors at the first Ewha-Kyunghyang Competition while taking refuge in Busan, he headed overseas in 1954 on board the aircraft of Lt. Gen. Samuel Anderson. He would go on to claim the Young Musician Award at the 1955 Young People's Concert organized by the New York Philharmonic Orchestra.

During the colonial era, most Koreans studying music overseas had gone to Japan. After liberation, they gained the opportunity to study in the West, and exchanges became more and more frequent. In the 1960s, more Koreans were able to make their debuts on the international stage after studying under the more advanced educational systems of



Pianist Han Tong-il

Western countries. Following close behind Han in establishing a presence on the international music scene were violinists Chung Kyung-wha and Kim Young-uck, among others. These musicians were able to study overseas after their talent was proven through performances with the Seoul Philharmonic or arrangements were made for them by overseas musicians who were playing in Korea thanks to active international exchange efforts. Kim was admitted to the Curtis Institute of Music on the recommendation of pianist Rudolf Serkin, who saw him perform during a 1960 visit, and would go on to make a name for himself internationally by claiming top honors at the Merriweather Post International Competition in 1965. Chung was admitted to the Juilliard School of Music in 1961 and would come to international attention with her 1967 victory at the Leventritt International Competition.



Cellist Chung Myung-wha (left), violinist Kang Dong-suk (right)

## Venturing onto the World Stage (1970s– )

The decade of the 1970s saw more and more musicians arriving on the world music scene as they claimed honors at international competitions. Following her studies at the Juilliard School of Music, cellist Chung Myung-wha (sister of Chung Kyung-wha) won first prize at the 1971 Geneva Competition. A third Chung sibling, pianist Myung-whun, came to public attention with his second-place finish at the International Tchaikovsky Competition in 1974 after studying at the Mannes College of Music, and would later go on to make his debut as a conductor after studying conducting at Juilliard. Violinist Kang Dong-suk also went to study in the US and made a name for himself on the international stage with victories at the Montreal International Music Competition, International Carl Flesch Violin Competition, and the Queen Elisabeth International Music Competition of Belgium.

The history of classical music in Korea is not a long one, lasting only a century. Yet it has succeeded in fostering the startling musical growth seen today and the emergence of world-class musicians. The Korea of today is no longer an importer of classical music, but a leading music nation producing a wide array of performers who have gone on to play leading roles in the world music scene. And the country has now established an educational system and facilities to bolster this, along with a wide range of performance venues and music enthusiasts.



Ensemble DITTO

## Chapter Two

# KOREAN PERFORMERS

In recent years, Korea's young classical musicians have captured the attention of the world with dominant performances at major international competitions. As the number of Koreans studying overseas grew rapidly in the years after liberation, their quality of performance developed by leaps and bounds. In the 1990s, classical music went from something seen as “highbrow culture” to something with popular appeal, a phenomenon attributable in large part to the development of music education and infrastructure. Today, requests are pouring in for Korean performers with outstanding skill and star quality to give festival performances, tours, and concerts overseas. In this chapter, we will look at the performers representing Korea today, from first-generation composers, conductors, vocalists, pianists, string musicians, wind musicians, and chamber music performers to the rising stars who are impressing audiences with their prolific performance activity.

## COMPOSERS

The situation is much the same in any country: modern music, and modern music composition in particular, is seen as the least popular and most academic of subjects even within the field of classical music. And yet creation remains, today as yesterday, the most vital area of art and the reason that new music has continued to emerge in the 20th and 21st centuries.



Isang Yun

Isang Yun, the progenitor of modern Korean music, passed away in Berlin in 1995. The most notable of the composers who has emerged in Korea and abroad since then is Younghil Park, a professor at Germany's University of the Arts, Bremen. Park completed her undergraduate and graduate studies at Seoul National University before

departing to study in Germany in 1974. She studied under Klaus Huber at the University of Music in Freiburg, eventually winning first prize at the 5th Composers Seminar in Boswil for "Man-Nam," a composition for clarinet and string trio. Named a head professor at the University of the Arts, Bremen in 1994, she has been highly active in Europe as a composer and educator, emerging as an invaluable presence in the modern composition community with work that blends Korean philosophy and Eastern thought with themes

UnsuK Chin



such as Greek mythology. In 2006, her opera *Mondschaten (Moon Shadow)* was invited for performance at the Stuttgart State Opera as part of an International Society for Contemporary Music festival event.

The composer UnsuK Chin was born in Seoul in 1961. Pagh-Paan's junior by sixteen years, Chin may be seen as representing the next generation after Yun and Pagh-Paan. One of the most noted and popular of this era's modern music composers, Chin graduated from the Seoul National University College of Music and studied with György Ligeti

### *Alice in Wonderland* by UnsuK Chin

The day of June 30, 2007, was a special one for UnsuK Chin and her home country: her new opera *Alice in Wonderland* was invited for performance at the Bavarian State Opera in Munich. Meeting the world for the first time under the direction of master conductor Kent Nagano and director Achim Meyer, Chin's opera made the public in her home country aware that new works of opera were being created and staged in the 20th century.



Jeon Minje



in Germany. During her time at SNU in 1985, she received the Gaudeamus Award while still in her twenties—a relatively young age for a composer. When Ligeti retired from the Hamburg Conservatory in 1988, his students—who regarded his mentorship as a kind of reason for being—would follow after him. But Chin wanted to be herself, not simply one of Ligeti’s students, and made the decision to leave for Berlin. Three years later, she penned her masterpiece *Acrostic Wordplay*. It would be more than two decades after her departure that her home

country first learned of her work. In 2004, she received the Grawemeyer Award, a prestigious international modern music composition prize, and in the spring of 2005 she returned to Korea after four years to work as a resident composer with the Tongyeong International Music Festival in honor of Isang Yun. Since 2006, she has worked as a composer with the Seoul Philharmonic Orchestra under conductor Chung Myung-whun.

Recent years have seen the emergence of young up-and-coming composers who aspire to become the next Unsuks. Born in 1974, Pahg Sun-young studied composition under Paik Byung-dong at the Seoul National University College of Music before beginning studies in electroacoustics in Bavaria in 1998. She would go on to settle in Paris to work with the Institute for Music/Acoustic Research and Coordination (IRCAM). With the support of the Royaumont Foundation, she set up an

installation at Royaumont Abbey that drew the attention of people in Europe. Another up-and-comer is Jeon Minje, who won the grand prize in composition at the 2009 Queen Elisabeth International Music Competition. After triumphing there as a student aged just 23, Jeon had a composition selected as a finalist in the piano category of the next year's Queen Elisabeth Competition.

## CONDUCTORS

Most of Korea's local governments have public orchestras, each with outstanding resident conductors. For this reason, more details are provided on the conductors at the helm of Korean orchestras in the section on "Korean Orchestras." The focus here will be on individuals who returned to Korea after establishing conducting careers overseas, bringing a breath of fresh air into the domestic music scene.

Koo Jahbom studied philosophy while attending university. He continued his studies of the subject in graduate school, before abruptly leaving for Germany to study music. In 1998, he graduated from the conducting department of the University of Music and Performing Arts in Mannheim, Germany. After that, he served as an opera coach at the National Theatre Mannheim and worked



at the Theater Hagen before taking over as principal conductor at the Darmstadt National Opera Theatre. After rising to the important position of Kapellmeister for the Hannover National Opera Theatre in 2005, he would return home to Korea in 2009 to assume the post of principal conductor for the Gwangju Symphony Orchestra. Today, Koo is principal conductor for the Gyeonggi Provincial Philharmonic Orchestra. The qualities he learned as a Kapellmeister in Germany have had more of an impact on his training methods than on his musical leanings. Indeed, a Kapellmeister at the head of an orchestra stages operas on a nearly daily basis—an average of 150 per year. When symphonies are added in, his role puts him at the command of a rigorous schedule. This level of systematic orchestra training and humanistic education has had a major impact on the Korean music world and brought about real improvements in the quality of the Gwangju Symphony Orchestra and Gyeonggi Provincial Philharmonic Orchestra.

Choi Hee-chuhn took over this year as principal conductor for the Korean Symphony Orchestra. Choi, who studied conducting at the Academy of Music Hanns Eisler Berlin, first came to the attention of the music world when he placed first at the 2003 German Hochschulwettbewerb in a unanimous decision by the judges. Choi's wealth of experience with conducting operas in Germany has excited high hopes for him as artistic director for the Korean Symphony. Since 2006, he has conducted performances of the operas *Otello*, *Così fan Tutte*, and *Tosca* at Saxon State Opera Dresden, where he serves today as senior conductor.

Sung Shi-yeon, the current associate conductor for the Seoul Philharmonic Orchestra, came to the attention of the global music community when she swept honors at the Female Conductors' Competition in Solingen, Germany, and the Sir Georg Solti International Conductors'



Sung Shi-yeon (left),  
Choi Soo-yeoul (right)

Competition, and placed second at the International Gustav Mahler Conducting Competition (no first place award given; the first winner of this competition was Gustavo Dudamel of the Los Angeles Philharmonic). After her 2006 Solti Competition victory, Sung signed a contract with a US agent and began her life in Boston, where she served until last year as associate conductor for the Boston Symphony Orchestra. Born in 1975, Sung studied piano at Seoul Arts High School and the School of Music and Theatre Zurich. She was in her twenties, she said, when she first aspired to change course and pursue a career as a conductor. She studied the subject under professor Jorma Panula at the Royal College of Music, Stockholm.

The aforementioned conductors have some even younger aspirants hot on their heels: Choi Soo-yeoul and Adriel Kim. Choi gained admission to the academy run by Germany's Ensemble Modern—listed alongside Ensemble Intercontemporain as one of the two most notable modern music ensembles—and is busy developing his career there. A student for

seven years under Professor Jung Chi-yong in the conducting department of the Korea National University of Arts College of Music, he frequently appears on stage alongside Ensemble TIMF, one of Korea's foremost modern music groups. Adriel Kim made a formal debut on a Korean stage in the summer of 2010 at the Ditto Festival, a project aimed at popularizing Korean classical music. Kim made a name for himself as a conductor by finishing as runner-up in the 2009 International Jorma Panula Conducting Competition in Finland. Prior to that, he studied both conducting and the violin at the University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna.

## VOCALISTS

To begin our story a bit far afield, the people of Estonia are said to have used “singing” as a weapon in capturing back their independence from the Soviet Union in 1991. In 1987, crowds of people—as many as tens of thousands of them—began gathering outdoors to sing folk songs and anthems. On September 11, 1988, the All-Estonian Song Festival was held. This traditional music festival brought 300,000 of the country's 1.3 million people out into the streets to sing songs of freedom. Later dubbed the “Singing Revolution,” this movement served as a real foundation for Estonian independence. As much as these Estonians, Koreans are famous as a people who love to sing. South Korea has a *noraebang* (singing room) on practically every street, where families, friends, and co-workers flock to sing and dance.

Western harmonies and melodies came to be added to the unique traditional singing style of Koreans as the Japanese occupation brought with it an influx of Western culture. This is arguably when professional vocalists in the Western sense began to emerge, while most of the opera

## Three Opera Divas

The troika of Shin Young-ok, Sumi Jo, and Hong Hei-kyung descended on Korea for a performance at Jamsil Olympic Stadium on Aug. 15, 1995, the fiftieth anniversary of the country's independence. Shin had made her debut on the international opera stage as one of the wood sprites in *Rusalka* at the 1988 Spoleto Festival in the United States; Jo as Gilda in a 1986 staging of Verdi's *Rigoletto* at the Teatro Lirico Giuseppe Verdi in Trieste; and Hong, after an appearance at the 1981 Spoleto Festival, as Servilia in a 1984 Metropolitan Opera performance of Mozart's *La Clemenza di Tito*. Hong would quickly achieve fame as a prima donna at the Met with a 1986 performance as Mimi in *La Bohème*. Shin would reach stardom when she substituted as Gilda for an ailing Hong in 1991. Jo, who had made her 1989 debut at the Salzburg Festival, returned to the stage in Salzburg for a 1993 performance as the Queen of the Night in *The Magic Flute*, a role synonymous with her to this day. Word returned to Korea about their achievements playing Mimi, Gilda, and the Queen of the Night abroad, and as they paid more and more visits to their home country, some members of the Korean public developed their own aspirations toward an opera career.



Shin Young-ok  
© Woo Ryong Chae (Studio LaLaLa)



Sumi Jo © Hyung Won Ryoo



Hong Hei-kyung

companies and choruses that would serve as their bases of activity arrived after Liberation. There are various theories about the origins of Korean opera, but it is generally believed that the first opera staged in the country was a version of Verdi's *La Traviata*. Staged after Liberation on Jan. 16, 1948, the performance was organized by the Joseon Opera Association, which had been organized by Lee In-sun. The part of Violetta in this inaugural performance was sung by soprano Kim Chakyung. Kim would go on in 1968 to form the Kim Chakyung Opera Company, which is believed to be the country's first private opera company. The Korea National Opera had been launched six years earlier in 1962 as an organization under the National Theater of Korea.

It would not be an overstatement to call the 1980s a "second Enlightenment period" in South Korea. The performing arts world in particular enjoyed what was essentially its first experience with sharing in contemporary global artistic trends through cultural festivals to commemorate the 1986 Asian Games and 1988 Summer Olympic Games in Seoul. If Kim Chakyung was a legend who played a pivotal role in the early days of Korean opera, it was three divas who would share the beauty of the vocal arts with the Korean public over the course of the 1980s and 1990s. They are Shin Young-ok, Sumi Jo, and Hong Hei-Kyung.

Performances by Korean vocalists on the world's opera stages have become even more frequent in the 21st century. In addition to the soloists mentioned here, many up-and-coming vocalists are building careers for themselves as members of opera theater ensembles in various countries. Perhaps the first name that comes to mind as someone who has established a worldwide reputation as a singer while working with a European opera company is Youn Kwangchul. Youn won the 1993



Youn Kwangchul as 'Mephistopheles' performs *Faust* in Vienna, Austria in October 2008.

Operalia, an international vocal competition organized by famous tenor Plácido Domingo, and soon had the good fortune of being chosen for a performance of Beethoven's *Fidelio* conducted by Daniel Barenboim. He would go on to work with such masters as Rene Jacobs and Marc Minkowski. In 1994, he joined the Berlin State Opera, where he sang for the next decade. The work of Richard Wagner is an essential part of his repertoire, and in 1996 he would debut as the Nightwatchman in a 1996 staging of *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* at Wagner's shrine: the Bayreuth Festival. Youn would go on to sign a five-year contract with the festival in 2007. Since last year, he has also been working as an educator, teaching students in the Seoul National University College of Music.

In the past few years, it has become more and more common to hear about Korean singers appearing in prominent opera performances. Among these artists, the one who has drawn the most frequent and powerful press in Europe is soprano Im Sunhae. One day, Im might appear as Servilia, boldly spurning the king's marriage proposal in *La Clemenza di Tito*; the next, she is seducing Don Giovanni as the far-from-innocent

country girl Zerlina. And this is only the tip of the iceberg. She brought the little-known opera *The Patience of Socrates* to Korean audiences and willingly agreed to appear in a startling role that saw her sharing the stage with naked female performers. The soprano's European debut came in the years 1999 and 2000. Having spent her previous years mainly working in early music, Im became even more renowned in 2006 when she sang the part of Zerlina in *Don Giovanni* under the direction of conductor René Jacobs at the Innsbruck Festival of Early Music. The production, which came two years after she first began working with Jacobs, would later be broadcast live to audiences all over Europe at the Baden-Baden Festival, with additional stagings in Paris and Brussels prior to its recording. The Zerlina sung by Im was a highly crafty one, contrasting with the simple and naive country girl presented in typical performances of Mozart's work. Director Vincent Boussard said he made the character slier and smarter to



Im Sunhae (left), Yeree Suh (right)

suit the personality of the singer—giving some indication of the vibrant character Im has established for herself in European opera.

Another noteworthy soprano is Yeree Suh. Born in 1976, Suh attended the Berlin University of the Arts upon her graduation from the Seoul National University College of Music. In 2001—just one year after her arrival in Germany—the student joined the Berlin Radio Choir. Under the direction of such master conductors as Nikolaus Harnoncourt, Simon Rattle, Kent Nagano, and Marek Janowski, Suh developed an extensive repertoire. Her first real work in the early music world came through a master class with René Jacobs. As this small connection blossomed, Suh would go on to sing the part of the Nymph in Monteverdi’s *Orfeo* at the Innsbruck Early Music Festival. She also enjoyed the good fortune of being invited to perform in the Berlin State Opera’s Monteverdi series in 2005 and 2007. Having determined that she could not proceed through feeling alone, and that she needed to study early music properly, Suh sang madrigals by Monteverdi under Jacobs’ direction. The attachment she developed to early music in the process brought her to the Schola Cantorum Basiliensis in Basel and the Collegium Vocale in Belgium. As she delved deeper and deeper into early music, she drew rapturous praise from not only the early music committee but the academic modern music community as well. Ultimately, she would resign from the chorus in 2006 and say goodbye to her position as a “quasi-public servant” in Berlin. Today, she is affiliated with the global management agency IMG Artists. In 2010, she made a profound impression on the Korean stage as the first visiting partner of the Academy for Ancient Music Berlin, an ensemble of global standing.

Today, there are many more Korean vocalists delivering standout performances in operas and concerts around the world than it is possible

to count on two hands. They include sopranos Park Eun-joo, Kang Kyung-ae, Park Hyun-ju, and Rim Sae-kyung; tenors Kim Woo-kyung, Alfred Kim, Kang Yo-sep, and Park Ji-min; baritone Han Myung-won; and bass Samuel Youn. Three names deserving of special mention here are those of soprano Hong Hae-ran, who took home first place honors at the 2011 Queen Elisabeth Music Competition, and Park Jong-min and Seo Sun-young, who swept the male and female vocalist categories at that year's International Tchaikovsky Competition.

## PIANISTS

The lineage of Korean classical pianists goes back to Han Tong-il, who made his mark with Korea's first-ever victory in an international competition. A member of the Korean War generation, the young Han had the opportunity to play piano whenever he wanted at the US Fifth Air Force base—an experience that would prove a springboard for his later work overseas. While performing at an event for US military VIPs, he caught the attention of Lt. Gen. Samuel Anderson, commander of the Fifth Air Force. In 1954, he would travel overseas on board a US military aircraft to study overseas in the US. After completing his studies at the Juilliard School of Music, he came to the attention of the global music community with his 1965 victory at the Leventritt Competition. From there, he would begin an active career that saw him collaborating with such prestigious world orchestras as the New York Philharmonic and the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra.

The doyennes of the Korean music world were Shin Soo-jung and Lee Kyung-sook, who focused their energies not only on their reputations as performers but also on their efforts as noted educators working actively to



Shin Soo-jung

train the next generation. The winner of the first Ewha & Kyunghyang Concours (held during the Korean War in a Busan tent used as a temporary school), Shin attended the Seoul National University College of Music before going on to study under such notables as Josef Dichler and Wilhelm Kempff while attending the Vienna State Academy of Music and the Peabody Conservatory.

Gaining attention through appearances with the likes of Janos Starker and Giuseppe di Stefano, she would return to Korea and become, at 26, the youngest-ever professor at the SNU College of Music, as well as its first female dean.

Lee Kyung-sook, who studied with Mieczysław Horszowski and Rudolf Serkin at the Curtis Institute of Music, gained an international reputation with honors at the 1967 Geneva Competition and first place honors at the Philadelphia Orchestra Concerto Auditions. In 1987, she would become the first Korean to perform the complete piano sonatas of Beethoven; in 1989, she would do the same for Mozart's sonatas, and in 1991 for Prokofiev's. Based on this illustrious career, she would become the first director of the Korea National University of Arts College of Music and serve as dean of the Yonsei University College of Music. Through these positions, she would dedicate herself to the training of the younger generation.

The outstanding young pianists who followed this first generation have become a solid underpinning for the current Korean classical music community. Representative examples are Kang Choong-mo and Kim Dae-

jin, two pianists who have also been active as professors in the Korea National University of Arts College of Music. Kang graduated from the Seoul National University College of Music and the Peabody Conservatory before taking on his current position in 1993 as professor in the College of Music at the then-newly opened K-Arts, where he would train a number of younger talents including Kim Tae-hyung and Kim Kyu-yeon. In 1999, he would take on the daunting task of playing all of Bach's keyboard competitions in just over five years, an effort that left a profound impression on the Korean music world. Kang drew particular attention with his September 2011 hiring as the first-ever Asian professor in the piano department of the Juilliard School of Music, a significant occasion that demonstrated the global standing of Korean pianists.

A noted teacher who trained such talents as Son Yeol-eum and Kim Sun-wook, Kim Dae-jin has been highly active as a triple threat: educator, pianist, and conductor. After capturing the attention of the world with his victory at the Cleveland International Piano Competition in 1985 as a student at Juilliard, Kim would return to Korea and tackle such attention-getting projects as playing all of Beethoven's concertos in a day and playing all of Mozart's concertos in three years. With his subsequent transformation into a conductor, Kim charted his own music territory, while contributing to taking Korea's local orchestras to the next level in his



Kang Choong-mo

position as principal conductor for the Suwon Philharmonic Orchestra.

Two other figures who cannot be omitted from any discussion of Korean piano are Paik Hae-sun and Suh Hai-kyung, two empresses of the instrument who each boast

active recording careers. After completing her studies at the New England Conservatory, Paik took third place honors (no first place awarded) at the 1994 Tchaikovsky Competition and second place at the Queen Elisabeth Competition, achievements that would introduce her name to a global audience. She would go on to sign an exclusive contract with EMI in 1996, recording the steady-selling discs *Debut* (1998), *Salut d'Amour* (1999), and *Paik HaeSun—Liszt Liebestraum No. 3* (2003).

After emerging from Juilliard, Suh Hai-kyung gained attention by winning the 1980 Ferruccio Busoni International Piano Competition and placing second at the 1983 Munich International Piano Competition. Her dazzling rise to the stratosphere came when she was included in a 1988 list of the year's top three pianists as selected by Carnegie Hall. In a great loss for the music world, she was forced on hiatus for several years as she battled cancer. In 2008, she made her inspirational return to the stage. Since then, she has graced the world with her charisma and captivating skill in recording a full collection of the concertos of Rachmaninoff and Tchaikovsky for Deutsche Grammophon with the Saint Petersburg Academic Symphony Orchestra, led by Russian conductor Alexander Dmitriev.



## The Pianist Brothers

The arrival of brothers Lim Dong-min and Lim Dong-hyek, who shared third place honors (no second place awarded) at the 2005 International Chopin Piano Competition, heralded the beginning of a third generation of Korean pianists. Separated in age by four years, the brothers made names for themselves by placing first and second, respectively, at the 1996 Chopin Competition for Children and Young People. They studied at the Moscow P.I. Tchaikovsky Conservatory under Lev Naumov before entering Hannover National Music University. Dong-min placed third at the 2001 Busoni Competition and fifth at the 2005 Tchaikovsky Competition before returning to Korea, where he has since been active as a performer and educator. Dong-hyek placed second at the 2000 Hamamatsu International Piano Competition and first at the 2001 Long-Thibaud Competition. He would go on to finish third at the 2003 Queen Elisabeth Competition—where he would show stoutness of heart by declining the honor, citing problems with judging process—and fourth at the 2007 Tchaikovsky Competition. For his 2011 EMI debut, featuring performances of Chopin's "Scherzo No. 2" and "Ballade No. 1," he would be honored with a Diapason d'Or.



Son Yeol-eum



The rise of Korean performers who followed in their footsteps provides solid proof of the prestige Korean classical music enjoys. A premier example is Son Yeol-eum, who followed a second place finish at the 1997 International Tchaikovsky Competition for Young Musicians with first place honors at the 2000 Ettlingen International Competition for Young Pianists and the 2002 Viotti International Music Competition. She drew further attention by placing second in the 2009 Van Cliburn International Piano Competition. In 2011, she solidified her standing with second place honors at the Tchaikovsky Competition. Son matriculated to the Korean National University of Arts at the head of her class at age 17 before traveling to Germany in 2007 and studying at the Hannover University of Music, Drama and Media.

Kim Sun-wook is another Korean star who emerged from the Korea National University of Arts, gaining attention with a triumph at the 2005 Clara Haskil International Piano Competition. Kim's victorious performance at the 2006 Leeds International Pianoforte Competition was a particularly notable achievement, as he was both the first Asian winner and the youngest winner in the history of the event. Today, he is studying conducting at the Royal Academy of Music

Kim Sun-wook



in Great Britain, following in the musical footsteps of his mentor Kim Dae-jin.

The stand out accomplishments of ambitious young pianists in recent years have breathed a new energy into the Korean classical music scene. Born in 1985, Kim Tae-hyung studied under the famous pianist Eliso Virsaladze at the University of Music and Performing Arts in Munich, Germany. His subsequent achievements—finishing third at the 2006 Hamamatsu Competition and fourth at the 2007 Long-Thibaud Competition—provide proof of his gifts. Da Sol Kim, who was born in 1989, came to prominence by winning the 2005 Nagoya International Competition and has since established a world-class career with a third place finish at the 2008 Robert Schumann International Competition, sixth place honors at the 2010 Queen Elisabeth Competition, and a third place trophy at the 2011 ARD Music Competition. Ji-yong, who was born in 1992, made the leap onto the global stage as the youngest-ever winner of the New York Philharmonic’s Young Artists’ Competition in 2001. Ji-yong made his debut at New York’s Lincoln Center with the New York Philharmonic

under the baton of conductor Kurt Masur and took home first place honors at the 2005 Aspen Music Festival.

Another rising star among Korean pianists is Cho Seong-jin. Born in 1994, Cho is someone who has raised high hopes among observers of the music world, drawing the attention of the global public by winning the



Cho Seong-jin

Chopin Competition for Young Pianists in Moscow and the Hamamatsu Competition while still in middle school. His achievements provide proof positive of the development of Korean classical music education. Showing mature musicianship at a young age with a third-place finish in the 2011 Tchaikovsky Competition as a 17-year-old, Cho has a talent that is leading people to expect great things in the future from Korea's young pianists.

## STRINGS

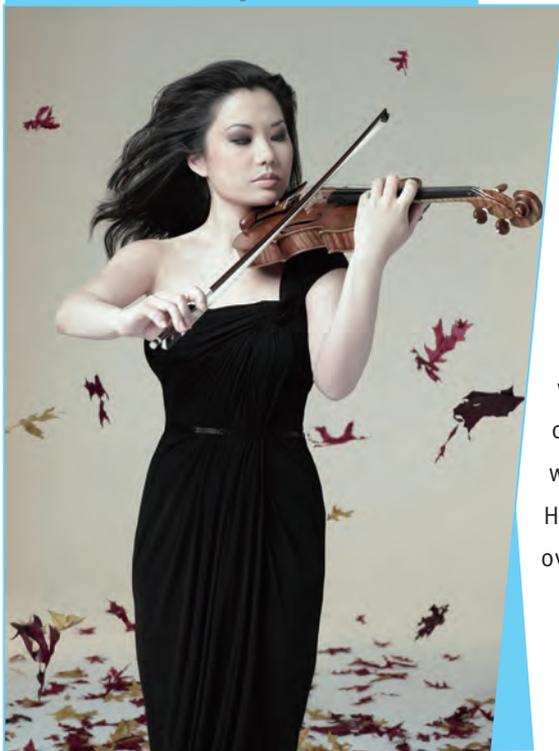
### World-Renowned Violinists

Among Korean violinists, the performer most active on the global stage at the moment is Sarah Chang. Chang began her studies of the violin at the age of four and proved tremendously gifted—an audition at the age

of eight led to a spontaneous invitation

from conductors Zubin Mehta and Riccardo Muti for her to play with the New York Philharmonic and Philadelphia Orchestra. She recorded her first album (released by EMI in 1992) when she was ten years old, setting a world record as the youngest recording artist. She would go on establish herself of one of EMI's leading violinists with a string of celebrated discs. Her most noteworthy recordings over the past few years include

Sarah Chang



violin concertos by Bruch, Brahms, Shostakovich, and Prokofiev, as well as a performance of Vivaldi's *The Four Seasons* with the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra. A student of Dorothy DeLay and Kang Hyo at Juilliard, Chang enjoyed one of the greatest honors a performer can receive by winning the Avery Fisher Prize in 1999. Today, she reigns supreme as a young master, giving some 150 performances each year, including collaborations with the Berlin Philharmonic and Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra.

Earlier, such figures as Kang Dong-suk, Kim Young-uck, and Chung Kyung-wha were already at work letting the world know of the talents of Korean violinists. Kang, who attended Juilliard and studied with Ivan Galamian at the Curtis Institute of Music, captured international attention by claiming top honors at the world's three main violin competitions: the Montreal International Music Competition, Carl Flesch International Violin Competition, and Queen Elisabeth Competition. He also graced the world's top stages under such master conductors as Charles Dutoit and Kurt Masur.

At the age of 12, Kim Young-uck caught the eye of Curtis Institute of Music director Rudolf Serkin during a visit to Korea by the latter, a discovery that would lead to the young Kim's studies overseas. Following a victory at the Merriweather Post Competition in 1965, Kim earned an international reputation performing with the likes of the Berlin Philharmonic and Budapest Symphony Orchestra. He also promoted the genre of chamber music as part of the Ax-Kim-Ma Trio with cellist Yo-Yo Ma and pianist Emanuel Ax.

A student of Ivan Galamian at Juilliard, Chung Kyung-wha made a name for herself as a violin virtuoso by winning the Leventritt Competition in 1967. In 1970, she made her European debut performing with the London

Symphony Orchestra under conductor André Previn. Her reputation in the world music community would lead to her taking on the post of teacher at the Juilliard School of Music in 2007. In so doing, she became only the second Korean professor at the school after Kang Hyo, who arrived in 1985. The year 2010 saw the release of a Universal Music box set to commemorate the fortieth anniversary of Chung's first album release on the world-renowned Decca label. The set, titled *Chung Kyung-Wha 40 Legendary Years: Limited Edition*, included every album she had recorded for Decca and Deutsche Grammophon.

As a professor at the Korea National University of Arts College of Music,

Kim Nam-yun has mentored a number of students representative of the next generation of Korean violinists, among them Kwon Hyuk-joo, Shin Hyun-su, and Clara-Jumi Kang. A student of Ivan Galamian and Felix Galimir at Juilliard, Kim claimed top honors at the Tibor Varva International Violin Competition in Switzerland before returning to Korea to become a professor and devote his energies to fostering the next generation.

Chung Kyung-wha



## Rising Violinists

Young Korean violinists have racked up a number of notable achievements at the world's top competitions in recent years. A case in point is Kwon Hyuk-joo, who was admitted to the preparatory school of the K-Arts

College of Music at the age of seven and studied with Kim Nam-yun. A student of Eduard Grach at the Moscow Tchaikovsky Conservatory, Kwon boasts outstanding skills that helped him become the youngest-ever second place finisher at the 1997 Tchaikovsky Competition for Young Musicians, claim victories at the 2004 Paganini Competition and Carl Nielsen Competition, and place sixth at the 2005 Queen Elisabeth Competition.

One notable characteristic of the next generation of Korean violinists is the presence of female performers combining beauty with outstanding talent. Newcomer Shin Hyun-su rose to stardom by capturing four crowns, following her victory at the Long-Thibaud Competition in 2008 and the top prize given by students of the Paris Conservatory. Shin is especially popular in Japan, where she has held as many as 100 performances in a year.

Clara-Jumi Kang became, at the age of four, the youngest person ever admitted to the Mannheim College of Music preparatory school; at five, she was performing with the Hamburg Symphony Orchestra. Her career history includes such highlights as a third place finish at the 2007 Tibor Varva International Violin Competition, second place honors at the 2009 Hannover International Violin Competition, and first place crowns at the 2010 Sendai International Music Competition and International Violin Competition of Indianapolis.



© Teouk Kang

Clara-Jumi Kang

Widely viewed as an heir to the mantle of Chung Kyung-wha, Kim Su-yoen took top honors at the 2003 Leopold Mozart Competition at the age of 16. A student of Helge Slaatto at the Music Academy Muenster from the age of nine, Kim made a name for herself in the music world by winning the Hannover Competition in 2006 and placing fourth at the Queen Elisabeth Competition in 2009. Her rise to the illustrious company of the world's top performers with the release of her *Mozartiana* album on Deutsche Grammophon added a new page to the history of Korean classical music.



Kim Su-yoen © GWK Münster

## Cellists

The cello is another instrument on which star international performers have been making their presence felt on the international stage. Korea's leading cellist is arguably Chang Han-na. Chang, who made her debut as a conductor in 2007 at the Seongnam International Youth Orchestra Festival, stunned the music world at the age of eleven by claiming the top prize and modern music award at the Rostropovich International Cello Competition—capturing the attention of Rostropovich himself in the process. Chang would go on to perform under some of the world's great conductors, including Giuseppe Sinopoli, Lorin Maazel, Riccardo Muti, Charles Dutoit, and Seiji Ozawa. Feeling that philosophy helps to



Chang Han-na

add depth to her performances as a cellist, Chang studies philosophy and literature at Harvard University; recent years have also seen her broadening her musical horizons into the field of conducting.

Currently a professor at the Folkwang University of the Arts in Essen, Germany, cellist Cho Young-chang drew international attention by winning awards at the Rostropovich International Cello Competition and International Pablo Casals Cello Competition. In 1977, he won a prize in the trio category at the Geneva International Music Competition with his older sisters, violinist Cho Young-mi and pianist Cho Young-bang. During his time overseas, Cho Young-chang focused his efforts on training younger talents while also working for the development of Korean chamber music as leader of the Hwaum Chamber Orchestra.

Yang Sung-won, a prized pupil of the noted cellist Janos Starker, completed studies at the Paris Conservatory and Indiana University before taking on his current position as a professor at the Yonsei University College of Music. His first album, a 2000 collection of Kodaly works on EMI, drew high praise from Gramophone, and in 2005 he tackled a recording of all of Bach's suites for unaccompanied cello. He would follow this up by joining pianist Pascal Devoyon for a recording of all of Beethoven's cello sonatas. An active presence in solo and chamber music performance in Korea, Yang won at the 4th Daewon Music Awards and took the Artists' Prize at 1st Gaeksuk Awards in 2009.

Recent years have seen major strides by younger performers as well. Lee





Yang Sung-won and the french clarinet ensemble Les Bons  
Beccs released *Musical Gateway* in 2011

Jung-ran, currently a deputy chief performer with the Seoul Philharmonic under Chung Myung-whun, drew attention by winning awards at the International Pablo Casals Cello Competition and Morris Gendron International Cello Competition, as well as the Isang Yun Competition in 2006.

Another cellist, Koh Bong-ihn, is well on his way to a career in science: he completed undergraduate studies at Harvard and is currently working on a doctoral degree in molecular biology at Princeton University. In 1997, he placed first in the cello category of the 3rd Tchaikovsky Competition for Young Musicians at the age of twelve. Koh also drew attention in 2008 by performing Isang Yun's cello concerto with the Isang Yun Orchestra at a Isang Yun commemorative concert in the North Korean capital of Pyongyang.

Born in 1994, Lee Sang-eun took home second place honors in the cello category of the Johansen International Competition for Young String Players and the Tchaikovsky Competition for Young Musicians. At the Cello Festival in Kronberg, Germany, she was selected at the top young cellist of

the year, giving a commemorative recital on the last day of the event. Lee is also a favorite of famed cellist Chung Myung-wha.

The viola is an instrument where ensemble performance is more common than solo work. Among those establishing presences as soloists on the instrument are Richard Yongjae O'Neill and Choi Eun-sik.

A Juilliard graduate, O'Neill is well known as the leader of Ensemble DITTO. A performer with the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center in New York and the Sejong Soloists, he has built a diverse career history for himself, working not only with such famous performers as Gil Shaham, Joshua Bell, and Chung Kyung-wha but also the Emerson and Juilliard String Quartets. With an international reputation as a soloist, he has played with the London Philharmonic under Vladimir Jurowski as well as the Los Angeles Philharmonic under Miguel Harth-Bedoya.

Choi Eun-sik traveled to the US at the age of 16 and studied at the Curtis Institute of Music before going on the New England Conservatory in Boston. A member of the Borromeo String Quartets, Choi studied under professors at the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music and the New England Conservatory from a young age. He is now a professor at the Seoul National University College of Music.

The double bass is the instrument that has traditionally received the





least attention in Korean string groups. One up-and-coming performer is Sung Minje, who recently picked up awards at the International Sperger Competition in Germany, the Koussevitsky Competition in Russia, and the International Instrumental Competition Markneukirchen in Germany.

## WIND INSTRUMENTS

Wind instruments tend to see less representation in orchestras compared to string instruments. Since the repertoire demands performers capable of showing their skills as soloists, young and outstandingly gifted performers have recently been joining Korean orchestras from in and outside Korea. Representative examples are Jerry Chae Jae-il with the Seoul Philharmonic and Kim Hong-bak. Chae is currently a senior clarinetist with the orchestra under conductor Chung Myung-whun. His father, the late Chae Il-hee, was also a chief performer with the Seoul Philharmonic. The younger Chae began studying the clarinet with his father at a young age. During his third year at the Yewon School, he traveled to the US, where he completed his studies at Juilliard. He drew international attention with awards at the International Clarinet Association Young Artist International Competition

and the Geneva Competition. Prior to being selected as chief clarinetist with the Seoul Philharmonic, he worked with the Philadelphia Orchestra, the Metropolitan Opera in New York, and the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra.

Horn player Kim Hong-bak has been establishing himself with a flurry of activity on brass, a form of instrument that tends to be less represented than woodwinds. He began playing the horn at 14 and gained recognition on the international stage by claiming top honors at the Dong-A Music Competition at the age of 19. That same year, he was runner-up for the Philip Farkas Award sponsored by the International Horn Society. While studying at the Mozarteum University of Salzburg, he showed a special talent for chamber music, earning scholarships to study at the Villa Musica and Gustav Mahler Academy. Chosen as a performer and scholarship recipient for Live Music Now-Yehudi Menuhin, he has also been invited to give recitals at various festivals in Europe.

Among flutists, the strides made by female performers have been

Clarinetist Jerry Chae Jae-il (left),  
horn player Kim Hong-bak (right)



## Young Wind Performers

With more and more outstanding overseas performers coming to Korea, and with the educational environment improving as a result, students have been learning wind instruments at a progressively earlier age. A more diverse range of instruments, including the recorder, has also drawn attention as methods of audience enjoyment have diversified.

Born in 1996, Kim Han started studying the clarinet in the second grade. In 2007, he would hold a solo recital at the Kumho Prodigy Concert Series. Compared to the piano or string instruments, the clarinet is a difficult instrument for a younger person to play. For this reason, it drew much attention when Kim was invited to perform in 2008 as the youngest-ever soloist at the International Clarinet Festival in Japan and received a special award from the judges as "Most Promising Performer" at the 2nd Beijing International Music Competition while enrolled at the Yewon School. Today, Kim studies at Eton College in the United Kingdom and is the youngest of the Kumho Asiana Soloists in Korea.

Leonardo Min-suk Kwon has been active in the music world since sharing first prize honors at the 3rd Montreal International Recorder Competition in 2009. He continues today playing a diverse repertoire in Korea on the uncommon instrument.



Leonardo Min-suk Kwon

Kim Han



Following studies in music theory at the Seoul National University College of Music, Kwon went to school in the Netherlands, graduating from the Royal Conservatory of The Hague. Today, he heads the Concordi Musici ensemble and remains active as one of the few recorder performers in the Korean wind instrument community, releasing discs with major compositions for the instrument by Vivaldi, Mancini, and Scarlatti.

particularly notable. Jasmine Choi, who studied at the Curtis Institute of Music and Juilliard, overcame a 186-to-1 competition rate in 2006 to win a position as principal flutist with the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra at the age of 22. Earning tenure in 2008, she would go on to perform sonatas by Bach and Franck and “Garak for Flute & Piano” by Isang Yun, Korea’s leading composer, at London’s Wigmore Hall in 2009. Amid her efforts to combine a traditional repertoire with more popular pieces, she performed with Xavier de Maistre, senior harpist for the Vienna Philharmonic, for the 250th anniversary of Mozart’s birth—a recording of which was released by Sony as *Jasmine Choi Plays Mozart*. She would go on to release the disc *Fantasy*, also with Sony.

In 1992, at a time when Korean wind performers were drawing little attention, flutist Yoon Hyeri gave notice of their potential by becoming the first Korean to place third at the Geneva Competition in Switzerland. Completing her studies at the Curtis Institute of Music, the Paris National

Flutists Jasmin Choi and Yoon Hyeri



Conservatory of Music, the Basel Music Academy in Switzerland, and the Manhattan School of Music, she honed her skills as an orchestra musician working with the New World Symphony in Miami under conductor Michael Tilson Thomas, as well as the Tenerife Symphony Orchestra in Spain. Today, Yoon works to foster the next generation, joining the faculty of the Seoul National University College of Music in 2005. She has also released the *Elegia* disc in Korea on the Samsung Classic label.

## CHAMBER MUSIC

It is certainly the case that chamber music in Korea has received far less attention than soloists or orchestras have. But a number of soloists who have been honored at major competitions overseas have recently been working to promote Korean chamber music, freely assembling groups and sharing a wide-ranging repertoire.

Led today by violinist Kim Min, the Korean Chamber Orchestra was founded in 1965 by Seoul National University professor Jeon Bong-cho. In the years since, it has made significant contributions in promoting chamber music culture in Korea. Staging hundreds of performances with some of the world's most noted performers, it has commissioned compositions from top composers like Krzysztof Penderecki for ambitious inaugural performances—an effort that has been instrumental (so to speak) in promoting chamber music in Korea. Following performances at the 1999 UNESCO Peace Concert in



Paris under Zubin Mehta and a UN Staff Day concert at the UN headquarters in 2000, it was named an “official UN chamber music group for peace.” It has also been invited to give performances all over Europe: at the Göttingen International Handel Festival and Markgräfler Wine Festival in Germany and the Echternach Music Festival in Luxembourg. In 2011, it enjoyed a strong reception performing contemporary works at the George Enescu Festival, a national festival in Romania with many world-class orchestras in attendance.

The Sejong Soloists, led by Juilliard violin professor Kang Hyo, is a chamber music string group made up of young performers with outstanding skills and musical sense. The group was formed in New York in 1995. Kang, who trained numerous talented artists including violinists Gil Shaham, Sarah Chang, and Kim Ji-yun, is a musician who drew attention by becoming the first Korean appointed as a professor at Juilliard. Taking its name from a Joseon-era king who promoted various cultural inventions (including the Korean alphabet, *Hangeul*), the Sejong Soloists are a mix of performers from various countries, most of them Korean and second generation Korean graduates of Juilliard. Invited in 1997 to serve as an ensemble-in-residence at the Aspen Music Festival, they have presented the Sejong Soloist Series every summer and performed with some of the world’s top performers, among them pianists Leon Fleisher and Vladimir Feltsman; violinists Gil Shaham, Cho-Liang Lin, and Sarah Chang; guitarist Sharon Isbin; and cellist Chung Myung-wa.



Violinist Kang Hyo

## Male Chamber Music Performers

One of the most striking characteristics of Korean chamber music in recent years has been the activity of groups made up of male soloists. This represents an active attempt to reach the public with a wide range of performances as the groups give priority consideration to repertoire diversity and the right lineup for any given piece.

### MIK Ensemble

It would not be an overstatement to say that the opening salvo came with the MIK Ensemble. With a name meaning “made in Korea,” this group first arrived in 2003 with a dazzling four-member lineup: violinist Kim Soo-vin (first place at the Paganini Competition), pianist Kim Jeong-won (winner of the Bösendorfer International Piano Competition), violist Kim Sang-jin (a professor at the Yonsei University College of Music), and cellist Song Young-hoon (an awardee at the International Paulo Cello Competition). Each has taken time out from a busy schedule as a top-flight artist overseas to come together a few times each year for continued encounters with the public as the MIK Ensemble.

### Novus Quartet

Formed in 2007, Novus Quartet had a relatively young lineup at the time—the average age of its members was 23. But it had potential, with members whose talents had already been recognized at a global level. The group centers on violinist Kim Jae-young, with Kim Young-uk on the violin, Lee Seung-won on the viola, and Moon Woong-woo on the cello. Honored with awards at the 2008 Osaka International Chamber



Music Competition and the 2009 Lyons International Chamber Music Competition, the members are working to increase recognition of Korea and heralding a bright future for Korean chamber music in the world market.

## Ensemble DITTO

Ensemble DITTO may be offered as an example of an ensemble pursuing a more youthful and diverse musical style. Led by violinist Richard Yongjae O'Neill and featuring a main lineup of Stefan Pi Jackiw on violin, Ji-yong on piano, and Michael Nicolas on cello, DITTO has been establishing itself as a new icon of Korean classical music. With fluid changes in lineup among its youthful performers, it has been working since its 2007 beginnings to build a fan base with novel performances featuring not only a diverse repertoire but themes never before seen in the established classical music world. Over the years, such performers as violinists Johnny Lee and Shunsuke Sato, cellist Patrick Jee, pianists Lee Yoon-soo and Lim Dong-hyek, and double bassist Daxun Zhang have taken part with performances of Schubert, Schumann, and Brahms. The ensemble has also met the various musical demands of audiences by selecting such themes as "love" and "Bohemian" for its performances. After bringing sellout concerts—and an enthusiastic female fan base—to classical music performance venues, DITTO extended its reach to Japan in 2010 with successful performances at the Tokyo International Forum and Osaka Symphony Hall. At the moment, it is showing new possibilities for Korean performance by venturing into the Japanese classical music market—the world's second largest—and making moves toward the global market.



MIK Ensemble, Novus Quartet, and Ensemble DITTO



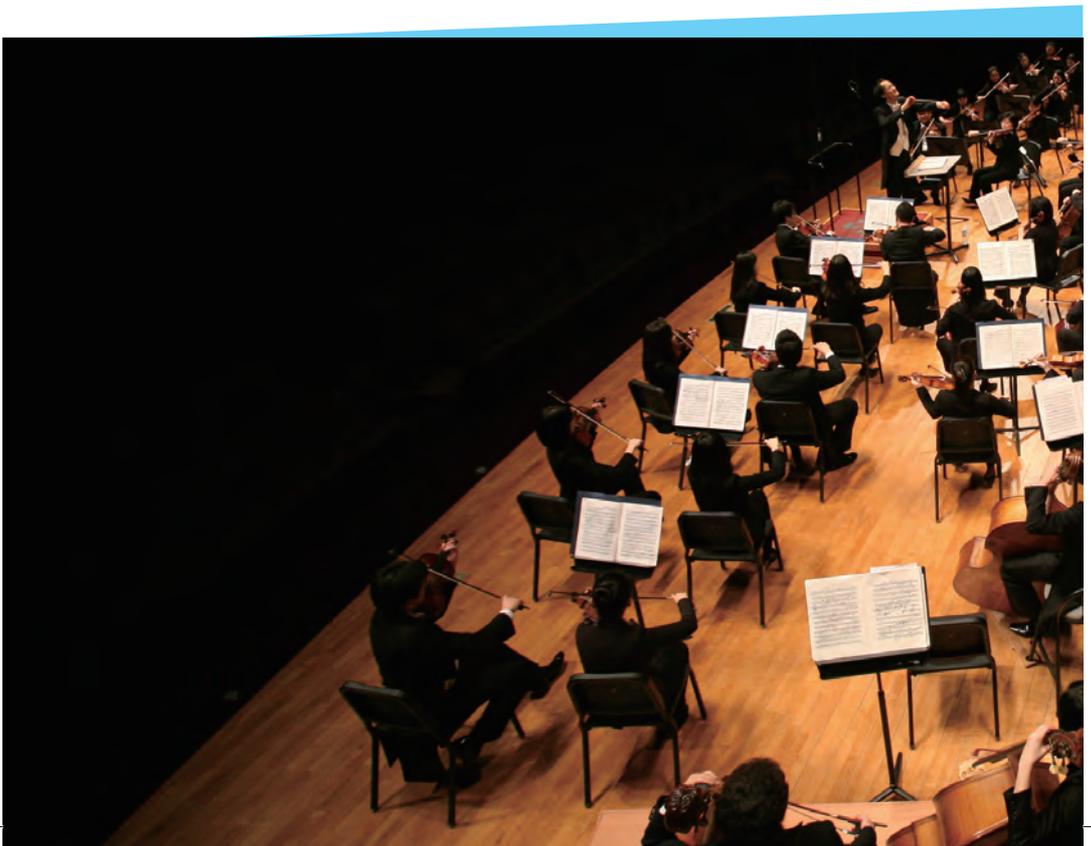
## Chapter Three

# KOREA'S ORCHESTRAS

**T**he history of Korean orchestras since their beginnings with the Central Friends of Music Society (Jungang Aguhoe) in 1926, Korean Orchestras have been a major force in alerting the world to the potential of Korean classical music. Prominent among them are the Seoul Philharmonic Orchestra (established in 1948), which recently followed up a 2010 tour of four European countries by signing a 2011 contract with Deutsche Grammophon, and the KBS Symphony Orchestra (1956), which enjoyed great success with October 2010 performances at Carnegie Hall and the Kennedy Center in New York, as well as a concert to celebrate the 65th anniversary of the United Nations. Also making noteworthy strides are the Gangnam Symphony Orchestra (1997), which became the first Korean orchestra to record the complete symphonies of Beethoven, and

the Korean Symphony Orchestra (1985), which has accompanied such luminaries as Placido Domingo and Sting for their Korean performances. The orchestras of today are more diverse than ever, with local ensembles in particular showing impressive qualitative and quantitative growth during the 2000s. An indication of this can be seen with the Suwon Philharmonic Orchestra, which played to a sold-out house at Carnegie Hall in 2009; the Busan Philharmonic Orchestra, which became the first Korean orchestra to play the complete symphonies of Mahler; and various other ensembles representing Korea's different provinces and cities like Gwangju, Daejeon, and Daegu.

As they take on an increasingly eclectic repertoire to suit diversifying

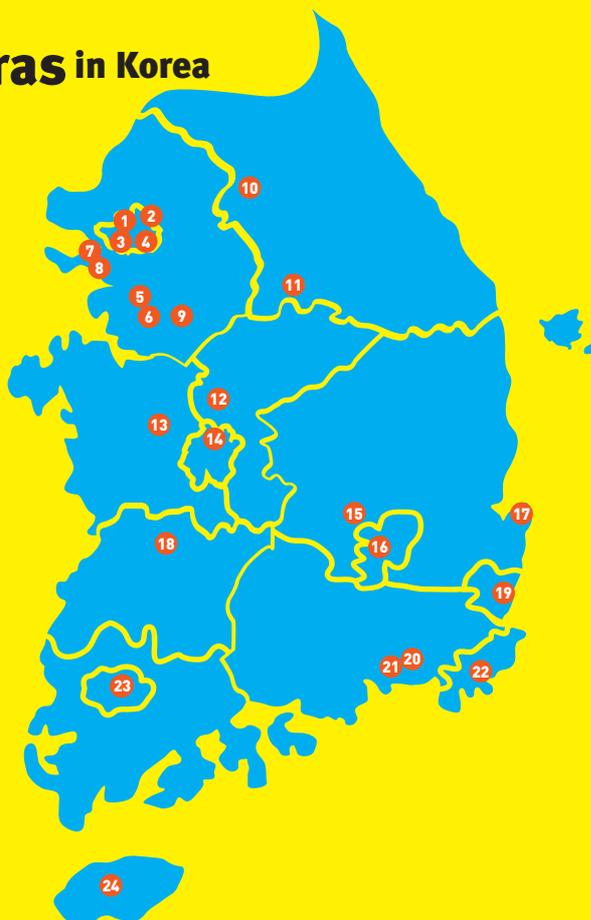


audience tastes and the demands of Korean classical music fans, individual orchestras have been developing their own unique musical character. Representative examples of this include the Seoul Philharmonic and Busan Philharmonic's Mahler cycles, the Suwon Philharmonic's Beethoven series, and the Jeju Provincial Orchestra's performance of the complete works of Bruckner. In addition to aiding the development of the individual ensembles, this has also contributed to the diversification of Korean classical music in a broader sense. To provide a sense of where Korea's orchestras stand today, a total of 24 orchestras have been selected from Korea's cities and provinces. Each has been working to expand the base for classical music with a robust range of musical activities.

Korean Symphony Orchestra



# Orchestras in Korea



- 1 Seoul Philharmonic Orchestra
- 2 Korean Symphony Orchestra
- 3 KBS Symphony Orchestra
- 4 Gangnam Symphony Orchestra
- 5 Suwon Philharmonic Orchestra
- 6 G-Philharmonic Orchestra
- 7 Incheon Philharmonic Orchestra
- 8 Bucheon Philharmonic Orchestra
- 9 Seongnam Philharmonic Orchestra
- 10 Chuncheon Philharmonic Orchestra
- 11 Wonju Philharmonic Orchestra
- 12 Cheongju Philharmonic Orchestra
- 13 Chungnam Philharmonic Orchestra
- 14 Daejeon Philharmonic Orchestra
- 15 Gyeongsangbuk-do Provincial Symphony
- 16 Daegu City Symphony Orchestra
- 17 Pohang City Philharmonic Orchestra
- 18 Jeonju Symphony Orchestra
- 19 Ulsan Symphony Orchestra
- 20 Changwon Philharmonic Orchestra
- 21 Changwon, Masan City Symphony Orchestra
- 22 Busan Philharmonic Orchestra
- 23 Gwangju Symphony Orchestra
- 24 Jeju Provincial Orchestra

## Seoul / Gyeonggi Province / Incheon Area

### Seoul Philharmonic Orchestra

The Seoul Philharmonic Orchestra was first established in 1948 as the Seoul Symphony Orchestra. Its artistic directors and principal conductors over the years have included Kim Saeng-ryo (its first), Kim Man-bok, Park Eun-seong, and Kwak Sung; today, the post is held by Chung Myung-whun. Gaining independence with the 2005 establishment of the Seoul Philharmonic Orchestra Corporation, it has engaged in a flurry of activity befitting Korea's leading orchestra in substance as well as name, with around 130 performances every year from a broad-ranging repertoire. It continues to play a leading role in the Korean classical music world with regular performances such as its "Masterpiece Series," which has seen appearances by associate conductor Sung Shi-yeon and world-renowned guest conductors like Arild Remmeriet, Eivind Aadland, and Jesús López-

Seoul Philharmonic Orchestra



Cobo, as well as performers like Gautier Capuçon, Nelson Goerne, and Alban Gerhardt. Meanwhile, the “Ars Nova Series,” organized by resident composer and Grawemeyer Award winner Unsuik Chin, provides a glimpse at the essence of modern music with a range of programming that is difficult to find even overseas. Following a 2010 tour of nine cities in four European countries—Italy, Germany, the Czech Republic, and Russia—the orchestra enjoyed a rapturous reception from local media and critics with a 2010 festival tour of the continent, with stops at the Edinburgh Festival, among other places. Also in 2011, the orchestra signed a contract with Deutsche Grammophon to release two discs a year for five years. The first releases were recordings of compositions by Debussy and Ravel and Mahler’s Symphony No. 1.

### **Korean Symphony Orchestra**

Established on Mar. 31, 1985, as a private orchestra, the Korean Symphony Orchestra was made a corporation in 2001 and took up residence in Seoul Arts Center. Its first musical director/principal conductor was the late Hong Yeon-taek. Violinist Kim Min would go on to serve as musical director and Park Eun-seong as conductor; in 2011, Choi Hee-jun arrived as principal conductor to lead the ensemble today. Since signing a contract in 1987 to serve as the exclusive orchestra for the National Theater of Korea, it has accompanied the Korea National Opera, Korea National Ballet Company, and National Chorus of Korea, while also clearly demonstrating its role as a resident group at Seoul Arts Center with various concerts at the venue. The orchestra has been providing accompaniment for the Seoul International Music Competition since 2008 and holds an average of more than 90 performances each year. It has also assisted corporate

contribution activities through various corporate concerts, working to expand the audience base for classical music.

## **KBS Symphony Orchestra**

Affiliated with the Korean Broadcasting System (KBS) television network, the KBS Symphony Orchestra was first established on Dec. 20, 1956. Its past general directors have included Lee Gang-suk, Kim Man-bok, and Kim Dong-seong; its first principal conductor was Lim Won-sik, followed by Hong Yeon-taek, Won Gyeong-su, Othmar Mága, Chung Myung-whun, and Dmitry Kitayenko. After a five-year vacancy, the position was assumed by Hahm Shin-ik, the orchestra's current conductor. In addition, senior guest conductors have included such world-renowned figures as Walter Giesen, Moshe Atzmon, Vakhtang Jordania, Park Eun-seong, and Kwak Sung. In

KBS Symphony Orchestra



addition to some 28 regular concerts per year, the orchestra delivers over 80 other performances. As a professional orchestra, it has established a name for itself as Korea's premier symphonic ensemble, while also making proud contributions to the expansion and development of Korea's symphonic music audience base through its affiliation with KBS. Over the years, it has enjoyed a strong reception performing in the US, Southeast Asia, China, Japan, Germany, and elsewhere. In August 2008, it drew national interest with an inter-Korean symphony concert with the North Korean National Symphony Orchestra.

### **Gangnam Symphony Orchestra**

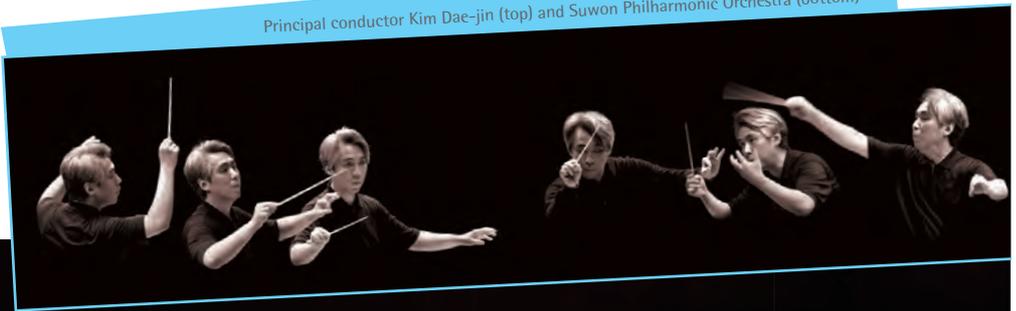
Established in 1997, the Gangnam Symphony Orchestra is affiliated with the Gangnam district of Seoul, with a location in the Gangnam Civic Center. This orchestra was founded with the goals of uplifting the local citizenry and addressing the difficulty of providing Seoul with sufficient cultural benefits through the Seoul Philharmonic alone. Since its establishment, Suh Hyun-suk has served as principal conductor. Around 30 to 40 percent of its concerts are for district residents, wishing them a happy new year through a New Year's concert and organizing a pop concert by Yangjae Stream in the summer. One of the more active orchestras in recording, it has released collections of the complete symphonies of Beethoven and Brahms.

### **Suwon Philharmonic Orchestra**

The Suwon Philharmonic Orchestra was established at Suwon Citizens' Hall in 1982, with Song Tae-ok as its first conductor. It was later led by the late Jung Doo-young, Kim Mong-pil, Kum Nan-sae, and Park Eun-seong;

the sixth and current principal conductor is Kim Dae-jin. In addition to performances with world-renowned artists like Mikhail Petukhov and John O’Conor, it has mounted over 60 performances each year with regular concerts, feature concerts, and more. It has extended its efforts overseas with an invitational performance at Osaka Symphony Hall for Asia Orchestra Week and a tour of four cities in Germany at the invitation of the Eckelshausener Musiktage. Its 2009 performance at New York’s Carnegie Hall was especially noteworthy, providing proof of the orchestra’s international standing with a sellout crowd and alerting the world to the dazzling rise of this local Korean orchestra. In 2010, it performed a Beethoven cycle at the Seoul Arts Center.

Principal conductor Kim Dae-jin (top) and Suwon Philharmonic Orchestra (bottom)



## G-Philharmonic Orchestra

Established as a public ensemble in 1997, the G-Philharmonic Orchestra has been corporatized in an effort to promote the competitiveness of its members, with the Gyeonggi Arts Center in Suwon serving as its main base. Koo Jahbom is currently serving as its musical director and principal conductor, following in the footsteps of previous conductors Choi Sun-yong, Yoo Kwang, and Kum Nan-sae. The orchestra gives around 80 performances each year, with a major repertoire including Tchaikovsky's 4th and 5th Symphonies and Rachmaninoff's 2nd Symphony. It has also focuses on developing international acumen with an active touring regimen overseas, including tours of China and the US in 2008 and Spain in 2009. Setting the goal of creating new value with the "G-Phil" brand, it has produced around 47,000 discs for free distribution to all taxis in Gyeonggi Province.

G-Philharmonic Orchestra



## **Incheon Philharmonic Orchestra**

Since kicking off with its first concert on June 1, 1966, the Incheon Philharmonic Orchestra has established itself as an ensemble with Incheon Metropolitan City, with the Incheon Culture and Arts Center as its permanent base. Its artistic directors/principal conductors over the years have included Kim Jung-seok, Lim Won-sik, Kum No-sang, and Chen Zuohuang; since October 2010, the two posts have been held by Kum Nan-sae. With roots in the Asian hub city of Incheon, it delivers around 50 performances each year. The orchestra has been well received by citizens of Incheon for a diverse range of performances that has included touring concerts all over Korea; performances for the Seoul Arts Center Orchestra Festival; concerts for young people, workers, and the disabled; “Song and Aria Night events; and New Year’s concerts. Among its strongest repertoire are some of the most frequently played pieces at concerts, including Brahms’ 3rd and 4th Symphonies, Tchaikovsky’s 4th, 5th, and 6th Symphonies, and Shostakovich’s 5th Symphony.

## **Bucheon Philharmonic Orchestra**

Formed on Apr. 6, 1988, the Bucheon Philharmonic Orchestra is a busily active ensemble affiliated with the city of Bucheon, with the Bucheon Citizen Center as its permanent venue. Lim Hun-jung is now in his 21st year as principal conductor, sharing the orchestra’s joys and travails since assuming the post in 1989, the year after the orchestra’s establishment. Lim has had an unquestionable impact on the development and character of the Bucheon Philharmonic, which injected a fresh stimulus into the mannerism of the Korean music world with a novel repertoire including first-ever domestic performances of 20th century works by Schoenberg

Bucheon Philharmonic Orchestra



and Bartok, as well as the complete symphonic works of Brahms and Beethoven. Placing more emphasis on giving its all as a professional ensemble than on its performance tallies, the orchestra triggered a “Mahler boom” in Korean music with a series of concerts between 1999 and 2003 presenting the composer’s complete symphonic works. In 2007, it showed off its outstanding musical abilities as it took on a series featuring the complete symphonies of Bruckner.

### **Seongnam Philharmonic Orchestra**

Affiliated with the Culture and Arts Development of Seongnam City Hall, the Seongnam Philharmonic Orchestra is now a permanent ensemble at the Seongnam Art Center. It is a “young orchestra” that was first established in April 2003, but despite its short history, it has been highly active, counting a membership of over two thousand. The current conductor is Yim Pyung-yong; previously, David Ik-sung Choo and Kim



Bong served in the post for the first four years of the orchestra's existence. Its principal repertoire consists of classical pieces such as the symphonies of Mozart. Its regular concerts are mainly attended by audiences from Seongnam's Bundang neighborhood and surrounding areas with a strong thirst for culture. The orchestra gives around 50 performances each year, including regular concerts, feature performances, visiting concerts, Saturday "mini-concerts," and "School Classic" concerts.

## Local Orchestras

### **Chuncheon Philharmonic Orchestra**

The Chuncheon Philharmonic Orchestra was established in 1985 with Lee Han-don as its first principal conductor. Currently, the ensemble is led by third principal conductor Baek Jeong-hyeon, who succeeded Kim Yun-sik in 2009. It has organized a variety of themed performances for young people in Gangwon Province, including a "Concerto Night" event for discovering promising newcomers and young artists in the province; "Youth Recitals" for teenaged audiences; and a Film Music Festival. The orchestra's home city of Chuncheon boasts beautiful lakeside views, and the orchestra actively takes part in various city events suited to this natural environment, placing a leading role in the province's musical scene.

### **Wonju Philharmonic Orchestra**

Established in 1997, the Wonju Philharmonic Orchestra is affiliated with the city of Wonju in Gangwon Province, with Wonju Chiak Culture and Arts Center as the base of its activities. At the time of its formation, Lim Hun-jung was brought in as emeritus musical director and Jung Chi-yong as senior guest conductor; currently, the orchestra's principal conductor is

Park Young-min. Its repertoire includes series of symphonies by Beethoven and Brahms, modern pieces by Bartok and Britten, and operas like *La Bohème* and *The Magic Flute*. In addition to its contributions to promoting Wonju, with invitations in 2009 to the Isang Yun International Music Competition and Korea International Music Festival, the orchestra has made advances toward the global stage with an invitation to the La Folle Journée Festival in Japan.

### **Cheongju Philharmonic Orchestra**

Established in 1973, the Cheongju Philharmonic Orchestra is affiliated with Cheongju City Hall and operates permanently out of Cheongju Arts Center. Its first conductor was Lee Sang-deok; since then, Lee Jong-myeong, Shin Ju-yeon, Kum Nan-sae, Jang Mun-hak, Cho Kyu-jin, and now Yoo Kwang have waved the baton. The orchestra gives 25 to 30 performances each year, including regular and feature concerts and visiting recitals. Counting Ravel's *La Valse* and the symphonies of Brahms as its strongest repertoire, it performed at the Seoul Arts Center Orchestra Festival events in 2009 and 2010. Many of the members are from the "first permanent orchestra generation" who joined in 1995, when the orchestra was made permanent. These members have served to enthusiastically guide the younger members, helping to establish a strong musical tradition.

### **Chungnam Philharmonic Orchestra**

The Chungnam Philharmonic Orchestra was established in 1990 as the country's first provincial orchestra, with Park Jong-hyeok as principal conductor. Since then, the post has been filled by Lee Byeong-heon, Jang Jun-geun, and Kim Jong-deok; recent years have seen conductors invited



for every performance to present a diverse array of musical works. The orchestra stages 70 to 80 performances each year, including regular and special concerts as well as touring and visiting performances. Its efforts include touring Hongseong, Nonsan, Yesan, and the 13 other cities and counties of South Cheongcheong Province to perform a wide-ranging repertoire including classical music, lieder, pop, and opera. Its musical performances range from Beethoven to Stravinsky.

### **Daejeon Philharmonic Orchestra**

Founded in 1984, the Daejeon Philharmonic Orchestra has established itself as a resident ensemble with the Daejeon Culture and Arts Center since that center's opening in 2003. Jung Doo-young served as its

Daejeon Philharmonic Orchestra



first principal conductor, with An Joo-yong, Kum Nan-sae, Hahm Shin-ik, Edmond Colomer, and Chang Yun-sung succeeding him in the post. Currently, the position is held by Kum No-sang. Hahm in particular significantly broadened the scope of the orchestra's activity during his six-year term from 2001, with a US tour and performance for Asia Orchestra Week. With its "Masters' Series" academic program, it has sought to go beyond the Classical and Romantic eras to introduce a diverse range of 20th and 21st century composers including Stravinsky, Mahler, Debussy, Schoenberg, Bartok, and Varèse. It has also worked for the popularization of classical music with planned performances such as the "EQ-UP Concert" for very young children and the "Chang Yun-sung Music Class."

### **Gyeongsangbuk-do Provincial Symphony**

Affiliated with North Gyeongsang Province, the Gyeongsangbuk-do Provincial Symphony was formed in September 1997. The current principal conductor is Park Sung-wan, who follows predecessors Lee Hyeong-keun, Shin Hyun-kil, and Lee Hyun-se. The orchestra gives around 60 performances a year in the province's 23 cities and counties, including regular, invitational, youth, new artist, corporate visit, and morale-boosting concerts. Drawing particular interest and favor are its "Youth Concerts for the Future," which were planned with the goal of developing and fostering a classical music audience for the future. Primarily given at schools in small towns and townships lacking access to cultural benefits, these concerts have met with a strong response from schools and local residents for the opportunity they provide for children to encounter classical music.

## Daegu City Symphony Orchestra

Formed in November 1964, the Daegu City Symphony Orchestra has spent the past 46 years contributing to the development of musical culture and symphonic music in the Daegu area. Currently a resident ensemble at the Daegu Culture and Arts Center, it plans and executes an average of more than 60 concerts each year. Its first principal conductor was Lee Ki-hong, who was succeeded by Woo Jong-uek, Kang Soo-il, and Park Sung-wan. The orchestra's repertoire was expanded to include Russian and Eastern European music with the recruitment of foreign

conductors like Ravil Martynov from Russia, Bogusław Madej from Poland, and Vakhtang Jordania from the US. In October 2008, Kwak Sung succeeded Lee Hyun-se as the orchestra's ninth principal conductor. The Daegu City Symphony Orchestra boasts a repertoire as diverse as its history, with Beethoven's Symphony No. 5 a particular favorite.



Daegu City Symphony Orchestra

## Pohang City Philharmonic Orchestra

The Pohang City Philharmonic Orchestra was formed in March 1990 through the merger of the Pohang Orchestra and the Pohang Symphony Orchestra, two private ensembles based in the southeastern port city. Succeeding first principal conductor Lee Nak-seong, Park Sung-wan led the ensemble for a period of more than a decade. The orchestra is boosted by Citizens Who Love the Philharmonic, the rare example of local music

aficionados organizing to express their support for a regional orchestra. In 2008, Yu Jong took over as the ensemble's third principal conductor. The orchestra is currently based out of the Pohang Culture and Art Center.

### **Jeonju Symphony Orchestra**

The Jeonju Symphony Orchestra was formed in 1975 with Yu Yeong-su as its first principal conductor. Yu was followed in that post by Yu Bong-heon, Yu Yeong-jae, Park Tae-young, and Kim Yong-yoon; since 2007, the position of artistic director/principal conductor has been held by Kang Seok-hee. The orchestra gives around 40 performances each year, including regular and feature concerts and touring performances. Considerable efforts have been made toward expanding its audience base: it has worked to promote musical cultivation among viewers through lifelong education programs rather than simple lectures, and it is taking steps to draw more attention from members of the general public who rarely attend concerts.

Jeonju Symphony Orchestra



## **Ulsan Symphony Orchestra**

Established in 1985 with the goal of promoting culture in Ulsan and uplifting its citizens, the Ulsan Symphony Orchestra was placed under the city's government in 1990, where it remains today. Its first principal conductor was Han Byeong-ham; since then, Shin Hyeon-seok, Kang Soo-il, Park Sung-wan, Yu Jong, Chang Yun-sung, and Lee Dae-wook have contributed their talents to the post. The orchestra's efforts include visiting performances at the large factories in the Ulsan area, a noted industrial region, as well as efforts to provide Ulsan citizens with cultural opportunities through around 30 performances each year, including family concerts and citizen concerts. Currently, it is led by Korean-Japanese principal conductor Kim Hong-jae, who won honors at the 1979 Tokyo International Music Competition for Conducting. Under Kim, the orchestra is actively engaged in touring efforts in Korea and overseas.

## **Changwon Philharmonic Orchestra**

The premier orchestra of South Gyeongsang Province, the Changwon Philharmonic was established in 1991 with Kim Do-gi as principal conductor. In 2002, it was incorporated into the Changwon City Art Company. Its third and current principal conductor is Jung Chi-yong, who succeeded Chang Yun-sung to the post. Since early on, the orchestra has undertaken ambitious efforts to give Korea its first-ever performances of works by modern composers like Schoenberg, Hindemith, Khachaturian, and Lutosławski. The orchestra has earned particular renown for introducing Korean audiences to a variety of symphonic and chamber music works by Isang Yun (1917–1995), a native of Tongyeong in South Gyeongsang. Operating principally out of the main theater at Changwon's

Sungsan Art Hall, this orchestra continues to be invited consistently to perform a variety of works at the Tongyeong International Music Festival.

### **Changwon, Masan City Symphony Orchestra**

The predecessor of the Masan City Symphony Orchestra was the Masan Chamber Orchestra, formed in 1975. This ensemble was reestablished in 1984 as the Masan City Symphony Orchestra, with its name changed once again when Masan was incorporated into the city of Changwon in 2010. Its current base is the 3.15 Art Center in Masan, with Baek Jin-hyeon serving as principal conductor, following previous conductors such as An Jong-bae, Lee Dong-ho, Cho Shin-wook, and Lee Dong-shin. In addition to its regular concerts, the orchestra has visited underserved regions for performances at welfare centers, schools, nursing homes, and hospitals, while also actively performing in the Masan and South Gyeongsang region through the Orchestra Festival and Tongyeong International Music Festival. Counting Mahler's Symphony No. 1 ("Titan") as its strongest piece, the orchestra drew attention in 2009, its 25th anniversary, as one of the rare municipal orchestras to compose an opera.

### **Busan Philharmonic Orchestra**

The Busan Philharmonic Orchestra has grown into the leading orchestra in Busan Metropolitan City since its establishment in 1962, with first principal conductor O Tae-gyun followed in his post by Han Byeong-ham, Lee Ki-hong, and Park Jong-hyeok. Securing an exclusive rehearsal hall and venue with the 1988 opening of the Busan Cultural Center, it underwent a transformation in form as a professional orchestra. It further laid the groundwork for its development into an international ensemble with the

recruitment of the first-ever foreign conductor for a Korean municipal orchestra, Mark Gorenstein. In 2009, it welcomed Li Xincao as its new head, establishing a repertoire running the full gamut in eras. Also active as a cultural delegation on behalf of Busan, the orchestra embarked on a US tour in 1997, holding subsequent performances in Southeast Asia and China. It has also taken part every year in the Asian Friendly Concert in Fukuoka, Japan.

### **Gwangju Symphony Orchestra**

Successor to the Gwangju Civic Orchestra, which was formed in 1969, the Gwangju Symphony Orchestra was established in 1976 with Jang Sin-deok as its first principal conductor. Subsequent conductors have included Lee Yong-il, Nicolai Diadioura, Yim Pyung-yong, Kim Yong-yoon, and Koo



Gwangju Symphony Orchestra had a visiting concert to the Gwangju Prison in 2000. (left) Christian Ludwig, principal conductor of Gwangju Symphony (right)





Jahbom; the position is currently held by Christian Ludwig, who is also a conductor for the Cologne Chamber Orchestra in Germany. Affiliated with Gwangju Metropolitan City, the orchestra is based in the Gwangju Culture and Art Center and has brought audiences more than 600 special performances to date, including more than 270 regular concerts and performances for the Seoul Arts Center Orchestra Festival. It is hard at work building an audience base with popular works and giving invited performances for those with fewer opportunities to enjoy cultural benefits. In 2010, it drew attention with a performance of Mahler's *Resurrection* symphony in Korean translation at a concert to commemorate the 30th anniversary of the May 18 Democratization Movement.

### **Jeju Provincial Orchestra**

Established in 1985 as the Jeju Philharmonic Orchestra, this ensemble changed its name to Jeju Provincial Orchestra in 2008. It has been working



consistently from Jeju Island since Lee Dong-ho succeeded the late Lee Sun-moon as the orchestra's second principal conductor in 1998. Most of the members are Jeju natives; one interesting characteristic of the orchestra is that some of the performers have jobs farming Jeju's famed mandarin oranges in addition to their musical careers. In addition to giving more than 30 regular concerts each year, the orchestra has regularly taken part in the Jeju International Wind Ensemble Festival and the Seoul Arts Center Orchestra Festival. It has also contributed greatly to promoting the community through the production and distribution of recordings of the island's folk songs and school songs. Its main repertoire includes the complete symphonies of Bruckner and Sibelius, as well as Smetana's symphonic poems. It enjoys a relatively strong wind section thanks to the influence of the wind ensemble festival.



## Chapter Four

# MUSIC EDUCATION INFRASTRUCTURE

Music education institutions in Korea have undergone rapid change and growth since Western music first arrived in the country. The music colleges in Korean universities have been especially active in this sense, developing curricula to foster skills in both Western and traditional Korean music. At the moment, the country is home to around one hundred such colleges. This includes music departments at 84 four-year universities and music education departments at 11 education universities, as well as the Korea National University of Arts and other specialized education institutions—together representing a strong history in music education.

Seoul National University and the Korea National University of Arts(K-Arts), both located in the capital city of Seoul, may be singled out as particularly prolific in graduating Korea's foremost musicians. Each of them



is an educational institution with music as its focus, but SNU is affiliated with the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, which oversees national education policy, while K-Arts is affiliated with the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism, which supervises the country's cultural policy. For over a half a century, the Seoul National University College of Music has amassed a longstanding tradition as an institution for music education in Korea. This contrasts with the Korea National University of Arts College of Music, which was established in 1993 and is focused on following international currents in music education and stepping up efforts to locate outstanding talents and provide the needed support system.

## Other Music Colleges

Some of the country's most prominent music colleges can be found at Ewha Womans University, Yonsei University, and Hanyang University, each an institution with a long history steeped in tradition. After establishing Korea's first music department in 1925, Ewha would go on to divide it in 1947 into piano, orchestra, vocal performance, and composition specializations. In the process, it served as a matrix for music education, turning out a steady stream of talented female musicians.

Founded in 1885, Yonsei University began its music education history with a department of religious music at its seminary in 1955. Eight years later in 1963, it was granted approval to establish a college of music. Today, it operates five departments: church music, voice, piano, instrumental music, and composition.

Created in 1960, the music college at Hanyang University is famous in Korea for turning out prominent singers. The university's earlier incarnation, the Dong-A Engineering Institute, was founded by Kim Yeon-jun, himself a famous Korean composer and singer, and vocal performance was emphasized accordingly when the college was established. Thanks to this training, a great many graduates are working actively in vocal performance.

Other Seoul-area universities boasting outstanding music education professors and curricula are Sookmyung Women's University and Kyung Hee University.

Colleges in national universities outside of Seoul are also contributing greatly to local musical culture. Perhaps the most prominent examples are Pusan National University in Busan; Gyeongsang National University in South Gyeongsang Province; Kunsan National University in North Jeolla Province; Kongju National University in South Chungcheong Province; and Chungnam National University in Daejeon. Most of these colleges are divided into instrumental performance, vocal performance, composition, and orchestra departments, along with a department specializing in Korean traditional music.



Kyung Hee University (top),  
Yonsei University (bottom)

## Seoul National University College of Music

The SNU College of Music has maintained its tradition since it was first established as the Kyung Sung School of Music in 1945 by the late singer and composer Hyun Je-myung. In 1946, it was promoted to the status of music department within the SNU College of Arts, and in 1953, it gained independence as the Seoul National University College of Music, which it remains to this day. From its foundation, it included three departments: vocal music, composition, and instrumental music. In 1959, a new department of Korean traditional music was added, with specializations in traditional instrumental performance and Korean music composition theory. In 1981, the composition department was divided into composition and theory specializations; in 1982, separate specializations were established in the instrumental music department for piano, strings, and wind instruments.



Each department features a diverse educational curriculum geared to developing the students' capabilities. The vocal performance department includes opera workshops, as well as regular opera stagings every other year. The composition department has specializations for composition, theory, and conducting, contrasting with other colleges in the way it focuses on training professional composers, musicologists, critics, and conductors. The instrumental music department works to establish basic capabilities for professional musicians through various theoretical and performance courses, as well as providing performance opportunities through spring and autumn recitals. Master classes are offered each semester with professors invited from overseas, and students are required to complete coursework in accompaniment and chamber music ensemble performance. The Korean music department contributes significantly to promoting original work in Korean music through commissioning compositions from promising composers for performance at regular concerts held each year.

The College of Music also has an Asian Music Research Institute, Western Music Research Institute, and Opera Research Institute through which it promotes various research efforts at international conferences with prominent Korean and overseas musicologists, publishes academic journals and institute series, and studies different methods of music education.

The pride of the SNU College of Music is its outstanding faculty and the global efforts of alumni from throughout its longstanding history. Its vocal music faculty consists of seven professors, including basses Youn Kwangchul and Kang Byung-woon, while the composition and theory sections boast a hardworking faculty including seven composers and



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musicologists, as well as Busan Philharmonic principal conductor Lim Hun-jung. The instrumental music department has ten faculty members, including violinists Kim Young-uck, Back Ju-young, and Lee Gyeong-seon; pianists Choi Hie-yon, Park Jong-hwa, and Reichert Aviram; and flutist Yoon Hyeri. The Korean music department has another seven faculty members of Human Cultural Asset-level standing in the traditional arts for such areas of specialization as the *geomungo*, *gayageum*, *daegeum*, *haegeum*, Korean music composition, and folk musicology.

The activities of the college's 5,270 alumni are representative of the Korean music world in general, and the musicians active in Korea and abroad generally maintain close ties with their alma mater.

## Graduates of **SNU** College of Music

Many of these performers are included in this book on “Korean Performers.” Graduates who are actively performing today including composers Lee Shin-woo and Unsuk Chin; singers Sumi Jo, Yeree Suh, Park Ji-min, and Park Jong-min; horn player Kim Hong-bak; recorder player Leonardo Min-suk Kwon; and Korean Chamber Orchestra leader Kim Min.



Unsuk Chin, Kim Min, Kim Hong-bak, Suh Yeree (clockwise)

## Korea National University of Arts College of Music

Coming into being in 1993 as the Korea National University of Arts was established by presidential decree, the K-Arts College of Music is the country's only national-level professional music education institution following a practical skill-centered conservatory model. Its aims are to develop world-class musicians with purely Korean training and to establish itself as the world's top institution for music education. Consisting of departments of vocal music, instrumental music, composition, conducting, and musicology, K-Arts boasts an outstanding faculty and curriculum that set it apart from other institutions.

The vocal music department has a faculty of seven professors, including baritone Choi Hyun-soo. The instrumental music department has fourteen



professors, including violinists Kim Nam-yun and Lee Seong-ju, cellist Chung Myung-wha, and pianists Kang Choong-mo and Kim Dae-jin; they are also some of Korea's leading performers, with detailed introductions offered for some of them in this book's section on "Korean Performers." Four professors teach in the composition department, including the university's second president, Lee Geon-yong, while two professors teach in the conducting department, including the busy Jung Chi-yong. The musicology department boasts four professors, among them visiting professor Lee Kang-sook, a musicologist who also served as K-Arts' first president.



The college's curriculum is broadly divided into intensive studies in the area of specialization, theoretical studies, and convergence education—a trinity that provides it with a unique educational program. The intensive studies programs include practical studies, master classes, chamber music, special talks, and performances. The theoretical education serves to strengthen these practical skills (practical education is provided for musicology specialists) with modules dedicated to musical grammar, sight singing and ear training, composition analysis, and music history. And the convergence education program features a variety of courses developed to encourage creative thinking and performance abilities suited to a changing musical environment. In contrast with other music colleges, this college has students entering the intensive program for their area of specialization from the first year with practical training centering on individual lessons, offering workshops for practical training through an open format in which various professors and students meet together. Emphasis is placed on group performance as well; one of the unique characteristics of this college is the designation of required coursework in chamber music, choral, and ensemble performance.

K-Arts is unique in boasting a system for discovering outstanding prodigies and offering systematic education to develop their potential. Established at the founding of the university, the Preparatory Training Program for Young Artists is a preparatory school for the college with an independently operated one-year curriculum geared toward discovering and training artistic prodigies from an early age. In 2008, it was incorporated into the Korea National Institute for the Gifted in Arts, an auxiliary organization within which its functions have been developed and



Cellist Chung Myung-wha and her pupil  
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expanded further. Among the K-Arts preparatory school graduates and BFA holders (K-Arts offers a particular form of bachelor's degree known as a *yesulsa*) currently showing off their musical capabilities around the world are a range of pianists including brothers Lim Dong-hyek and Lim Dong-min (described in the “Korean Performers” section), Kim Sun-wook, Son Yeol-eum, Da Sol Kim , and Lim Hyo-sun; violinists Han Bin, Clara-Jumi Kang, Shin Hyun-su, and Choi Ye-eun; and double bassist Sung Minje.



Seoul Arts Center

## Chapter Five

# KOREA'S MAJOR VENUES

### Seoul Arts Center

Korea's largest multipurpose cultural space, Seoul Arts Center is firmly positioned as a mecca of the country's performing arts in substance as well as name. Located on the foothills of Mt. Umyeon in Seoul's Seocho neighborhood, the center was built between the years of 1982 and 1993. Its performance venues include a Music Hall and Opera House, the former home to a Concert Hall exclusively for classical music. With its curtainless 2,600-seat arena layout, this hall's structure amplifies the acoustic effects in the seats. A three-story, 400-seat Recital Hall for classical chamber music boasts an array of solo performances and chamber music concerts. Seating 2,340, the Opera House primarily hosts large-scale performances of operas, ballets, and musicals. Other facilities include the 710-seat



Towol Theater, where works of dance and theater are staged, and the Jayu Theater, which houses a convertible three-dimensional stage and seats 300 to 600. In addition, the month of October 2011 saw the opening the 600-seat IBK Chamber Hall, a venue for chamber music performance that has contributed to spurring on a glorious revival for the genre. Over the years, the Music Hall has been graced by such illustrious world orchestras as the St. Petersburg Philharmonic under Yuri Temirkanov, the New York Philharmonic under Lorin Maazel, the Sydney Symphony under Vladimir Ashkenazy, and the West-Eastern Divan Orchestra under Daniel Barenboim, along with such world-class artists as Mstislav Rostropovich, Mikhail Pletnev, Leon Fleisher, and Yuri Bashmet. The glorious melodies produced by these performers have helped to expand the horizons of Korean classical music. In addition, the Center has undertaken bold attempts at breaking down musical boundaries between Seoul and the rest of Korea, most notably with its Orchestra Festival, which has been held every year since 1989. It has made major contributions to the development

of professional symphony orchestras and the quantitative and qualitative growth of Korean classical music groups. Resident organizations include the Korea National Ballet, Korea National Opera, and National Chorus of Korea, while tenant organizations such as the Korea National Contemporary Dance Company, Korean Symphony, and Seoul Performing Arts Company have steadily contributed a wide range of creative activities. Figures announced in 2008 to mark the Center's twentieth anniversary put the number of performances staged there at 12,367, with approximately 27.8 million visitors—further proof of its standing as Korea's premier performing arts venue.



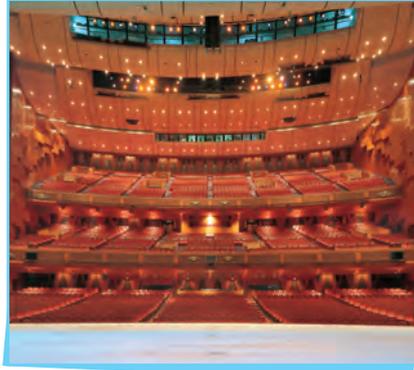
### **Sejong Center for the Performing Arts**

The Sejong Center was opened for use as a cultural space for citizens of Seoul. Accordingly, it is situated in a location of outstanding accessibility on the major Sejong-no thoroughfare of Seoul's Jongno District. Possessing a long history as a cradle of the Korean performing arts, the Center had predecessors in Unam Hall, which opened in 1961, and the Civil Hall, which was destroyed in a 1972 fire. It opened in its current location

in 1968, drawing global attention as the largest performance venue in East Asia. It played a pioneering role in Korean cultural and arts during the period from the 1970s to 1990s, when performance infrastructure was limited. Repair work and additional construction in 2003 and 2004 would usher in rapid strides toward globalization, equipping the venue with the most state-of-the-art systems. The three-story, 3,022-seat Grand Theater is a multi-system stage that hosts performances in a wide range of genres. Particularly noteworthy is the installation of LCD monitors—the country’s first—on the first and second floor seats and third floor wall to provide captioning and video services. Dating back to 1978, East Asia’s largest pipe organ (with 898 pipes) provides another interesting attraction. The Chamber Hall, a chamber music hall opened in 2006, is a two-story, 398-seat auditorium built according to new engineering methods designed to reflect sound sources to reverberate within the space, making it an optimal facility for chamber music performances and solo recitals for instrument



and voice. Some of the world's most notable orchestras have come to deliver performances here—the Berlin Philharmonic under Simon Rattle, the Israel Philharmonic under Zubin Mehta, and the Los Angeles Philharmonic under Esa-Pekka Salonen, while artists like tenor José Carreras

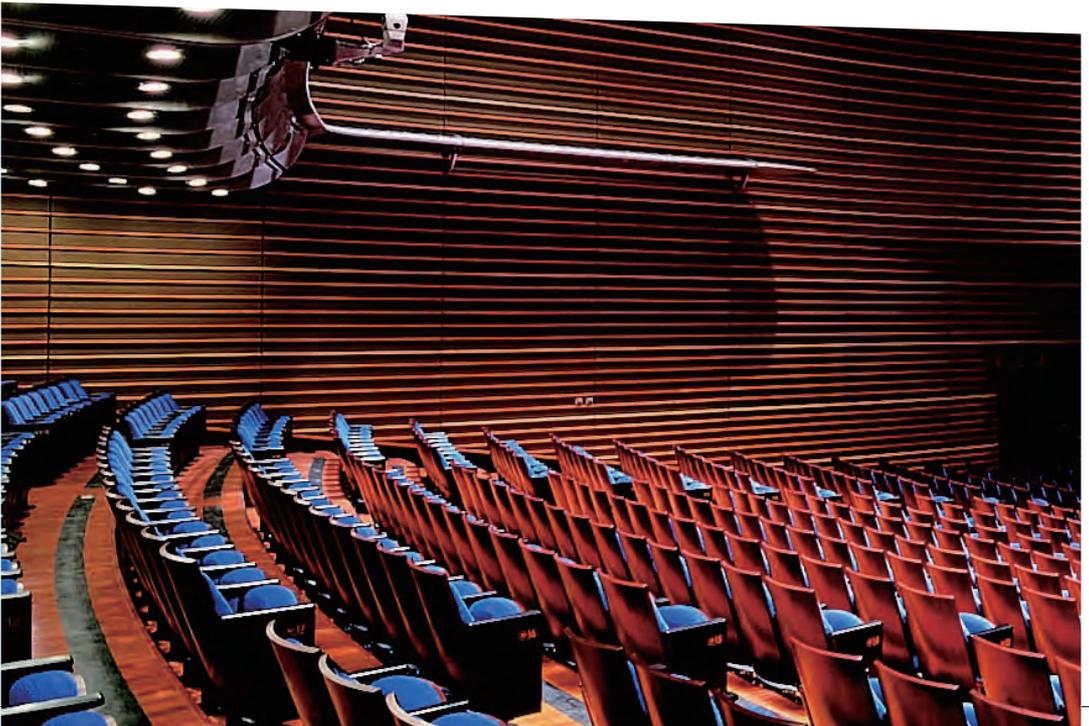


and organist Ken Cowan have graced the stage with a diverse array of performances. Today, the Sejong Center houses nine art groups, including the Seoul Metropolitan Traditional Music Orchestra, Seoul Metropolitan Dance Theatre, and Seoul Metropolitan Chorus. Through these groups, it has contributed to the popularization of the Korean performing arts with various activities at making a social contribution through culture, including “Sharing the Culture Together,” a free performance for underprivileged groups, and “Happiness for 1000 Won,” which offers visitors the opportunity to enjoy culture for less than a dollar in admission.

## **LG Arts Center**

The LG Arts Center is a cradle for culture and art amid a high-tech environment on the Teheran-ro thoroughfare in Seoul's Yeoksam neighborhood, an area that developed into a major economic center for the country with advancements in the IT industry. The Center drew much attention on its 2000 opening with its interior, a glass space providing an urban feel, and with its high-tech equipment. This multipurpose

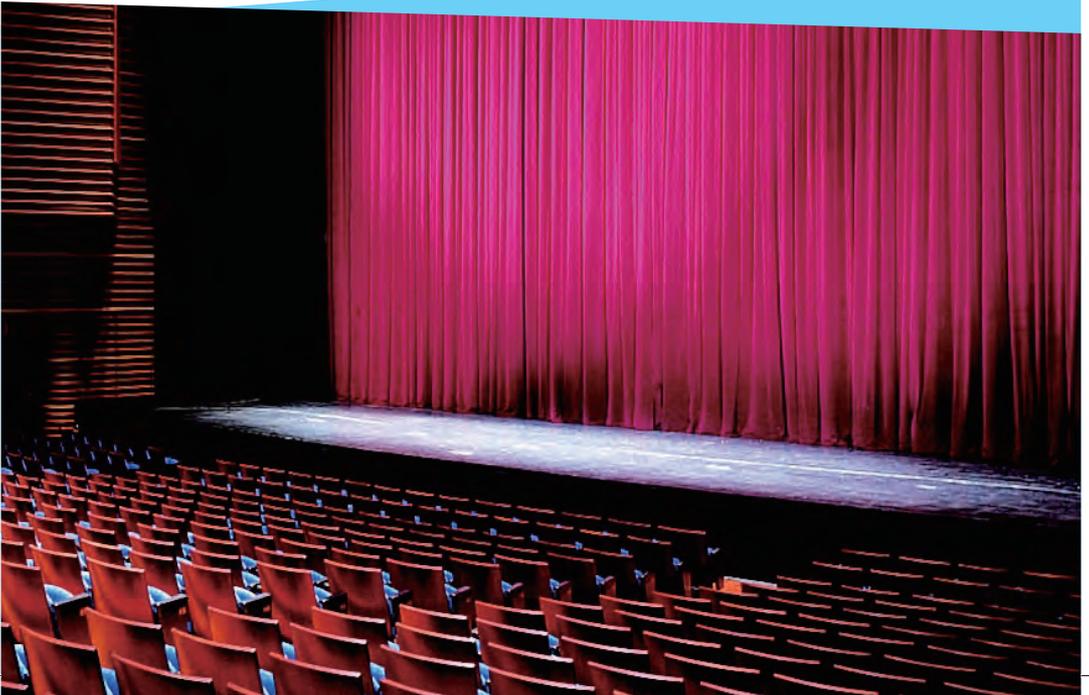
cultural space with three stories and 1,103 seats has hosted an array of performances in classical music, dance, and theater. Ensuring a broad sightline with its high ceiling and open layout, the Center was the first Korean venue named as theater of the year by the United States Institute for Theatre Technology (called the Academy Award of the theater world), an honor it enjoyed in 2001. With the country's first variable reverberation adjustment system and state-of-the-art structural separation to prevent noise, it is cited as an ideal example of a theater overcoming the physical limitations of its urban setting. Over the years, the Center has led the way in the advancement of the performing arts, inviting world-class artists from a wide range of areas—from ancient music master Jordi Savall to modern music pioneer Philip Glass. In addition to classical music, it has connected audiences with works in genres like modern music and Third World music that are less frequently encountered in Korea, affording visitors continued



opportunities for new cultural experiences with a repertoire distinct from those found at other venues. Examples of this include performances by the Pat Metheny Group (led by jazz guitarist Pat Metheny) and the



Buena Vista Social Club (leading figures of Cuban jazz), as well as works choreographed by Matthew Bourne (famed for his all-male staging of *Swan Lake*), and Germany's Pina Bausch. In addition, the Center has worked continuously toward repertory development, introducing audiences to outstanding and gifted artists and co-producing performances with arts groups in Korea and overseas. These efforts have truly brought a breath of fresh air to the Korean culture and arts worlds.

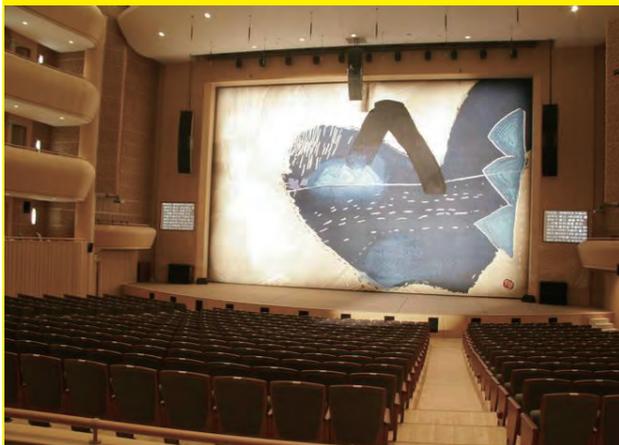


## Other Notable Venues

**Kumho Art Hall** Located near Seoul's Gwanghwamun, Kumho Art Hall is a new mecca for Korean classical music, with a specialization in chamber music performances. Completed in 2,000 with 390 seats, the Hall stages over five solo recitals and chamber music performances each week. One of its leading features is the "Beautiful Thursday" series, which has been staged every week for the past tense years. This series has dazzled audiences with performances by such leading Korean lights as Kang Dong-suk, Kim Dae-jin, and Chung Myung-wha, as well as overseas masters like Heinz Holliger, Igor Ozim, and Miriam Fried.

**Seongnam Arts Center** Located in the satellite city of Seongnam, the Seongnam Arts Center is a large multipurpose cultural venue with a 994-seat concert hall and 1,804-seat opera house. Since opening in 2005 with the first Korean performance by Gilbert Kaplan, it has sought to distinguish itself with a focus on staging first runs of performances never before seen in Korea, including a Korean performance by Ivan Fischer and the Budapest Festival Orchestra and a solo recital by baritone Matthias Goerne.

**Goyang Aram Nuri Arts Center** Opened in 2007, the Goyang Aram Nuri Arts Center includes the 1,887-seat Aram Opera House and the 1,449-seat Aram Concert Hall. The former features a 114-speaker arrangement that allows for even distribution of sound to every seat in the house, while the latter is designed with a "shoebox" structure to allow for optimal transmission of natural sound without the use of microphones, boasting a top-of-the-line system on par with the best theaters in Europe. Some of the world-class performers and groups that have graced the stage here include the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra, the St. Thomas Choir, and tenor Ian Bostridge.



**Daegu Opera House** Major performance venues associated with Korea's local festivals have made notable strides in their attempts to reach a global audience. The Daegu Opera House opened in 2003 with a performance of the original opera *Mokhwa* (Cotton Seed). Donated to the people of Daegu as part of a corporate contribution effort by Cheil Industries, this venue stands at four stories and houses 1,490 seats. Since opening its doors as Korea's first exclusive opera theater, it has offered cultural opportunities to local citizens through yearly Daegu International Opera Festival events in the fall.

**Daejeon Culture and Arts Center** The Daejeon Culture and Arts Center stages a Daejeon Grand Festival event every fall with a focus on musical performance and opera. This venue opened in 2003 with an Art Hall that seats an audience of 1,546 and an orchestra of 120 members, as well as a 630-seat Ensemble Hall. Through inviting such illustrious orchestras as the New York Philharmonic and Berlin Philharmonic, it has contributed to providing cultural opportunities to local audiences.

**Sori Arts Center of Jeollabuk-do** Located in Jeollabuk-do, Sori Arts Center is the center for the Jeonju International Sori Festival. Housing the three-story, 2,037-seat multipurpose Moak Hall, the 666-seat Yeonji Hall, and the 206-seat Myeongin Hall, this venue stages a range of performances in genres such as original *changgeuk* (Korean traditional opera), Western music, opera, and musicals. In the process, it has contributed greatly to the development of local culture and art.

Goyang Aram Nuri Arts Center, Sori Arts Center of Jeollabuk-do, Daegu Opera House, and Kumho Art Hall





Pianist Son Yeol-eum

## EPILOGUE

In 2005, Michel-Étienne van Neste, the secretary-general of Belgium's Queen Elisabeth International Music Competition, made his way to Korea. He wanted to know what kind of music education was taking place here that was sending so many Korean performers to his competition. That year, a total of 133 musicians from 37 countries took part in the violin competition, and Korea was second only to Japan in the number of violinists traveling to Belgium to compete. Van Neste had to see what was going on. On Dec. 7, he began a four-day tour of Seoul to see Korea's music education environment for himself—the young performers with their outstanding technical skill and their uncommonly sincere approach to music. After seeing the hard work they put in, van Neste said he planned to go back to Belgium and tell his colleagues about his experiences in Seoul.

In November 2011, just as the finishing touches were being put on the writing of this book, the Belgian public broadcaster RTBF visited the Korea National University of Arts College of Music in Seoul for the filming of a documentary spotlighting Korea's young musicians. The production team said they wanted to see for themselves just what kind of environment the standout Korean performers at the Queen Elisabeth Competition had

studied in. At that moment, the words of Michel-Etienne van Neste six years earlier became a reality.

One of the main reasons Korean classical music is drawing so much attention today is the way its young performers have been racking up honors at international competitions. These “musical Olympics” have their negative effects in addition to their positive ones, but they are undeniably a necessary evil, serving as they do as a gateway for young and talented faces to announce themselves. The superior performance of young Koreans at these events also gives an indication of just how youthful Korean classical music is.



Across the world, culture is in motion. Some are making their way to Asia, others are said to be eschewing any one base in favor of a more multi-faceted approach. With its young performers and young audiences, Korea is fast becoming a new destination for the migrations of classical musicians all around the world. We hope all of you reading this book will have the chance to encounter the youthful and vibrant classical music coming out of Korea. And we hope you will watch to see the emergence of a new center to the classical music world.

Seoul Philharmonic Orchestra



## APPENDIX

### Further Reading

#### Orchestra Websites

Seoul Philharmonic Orchestra [www.seoulphil.or.kr](http://www.seoulphil.or.kr)  
Korean Symphony Orchestra [www.koreansymphony.com](http://www.koreansymphony.com)  
KBS Symphony Orchestra [kbsso.kbs.co.kr](http://kbsso.kbs.co.kr)  
Gangnam Symphony Orchestra [www.gfac.or.kr](http://www.gfac.or.kr)  
Suwon Philharmonic Orchestra [www.artsuwon.or.kr](http://www.artsuwon.or.kr)  
G-Philharmonic Orchestra [g-phil.kr](http://g-phil.kr)  
Incheon Philharmonic Orchestra [www.artincheon.or.kr](http://www.artincheon.or.kr)  
Bucheon Philharmonic Orchestra [www.bucheonphil.org](http://www.bucheonphil.org)  
Seongnam Philharmonic Orchestra [www.sn-pac.or.kr](http://www.sn-pac.or.kr)  
Chuncheon Philharmonic Orchestra [www.ccart.kr](http://www.ccart.kr)  
Wonju Philharmonic Orchestra [wjphil.wonju.go.kr](http://wjphil.wonju.go.kr)  
Cheongju Philharmonic Orchestra [cjac.cjcity.net](http://cjac.cjcity.net)  
Chungnam Philharmonic Orchestra [www.cpo.or.kr](http://www.cpo.or.kr)  
Daejeon Philharmonic Orchestra [dpo.artdj.kr](http://dpo.artdj.kr)  
Gyeongsangbuk-do Provincial Symphony [www.gbart.or.kr](http://www.gbart.or.kr)  
Daegu City Symphony Orchestra [artcenter.daegu.go.kr](http://artcenter.daegu.go.kr)  
Pohang City Philharmonic Orchestra [phart.ipohang.org](http://phart.ipohang.org)  
Jeonju Symphony Orchestra [art.jeonju.go.kr](http://art.jeonju.go.kr)  
Ulsan Symphony Orchestra [www.ucac.or.kr](http://www.ucac.or.kr)  
Changwon Philharmonic Orchestra [www.changwonphil.com](http://www.changwonphil.com)  
Changwon, Masan City Symphony Orchestra [artmasan.kr](http://artmasan.kr)  
Busan Philharmonic Orchestra [culture.busan.go.kr](http://culture.busan.go.kr)  
Gwangju Symphony Orchestra [www.gjart.net](http://www.gjart.net)  
Jeju Provincial Orchestra [www.artjeju.or.kr](http://www.artjeju.or.kr)

## Addresses and Websites of Korea's Major Venues

**Seoul Arts Center** [www.sac.or.kr](http://www.sac.or.kr)

2406 Nambu Sunhwan-ro, Seochu-gu, Seoul

**Sejong Center for the Performing Arts** [www.sejongpac.or.kr](http://www.sejongpac.or.kr)

81-3 Sejong-ro, Jongno-gu, Seoul

**LG Arts Center** [www.lgart.com](http://www.lgart.com)

679 Yeoksam-dong, Gangnam-gu, Seoul

**Kumho Art Hall** [www.kumhoarthall.com](http://www.kumhoarthall.com)

3rd floor, Kumho Asiana Tower One, 57 Sinmun-ro 1-ga, Jongno-gu, Seoul

**Seongnam Arts Center** [www.snart.or.kr](http://www.snart.or.kr)

808 Seongnam-daero, Bundang-gu, Seongnam, Gyeonggi

**Goyang Aram Nuri Arts Center** [www.artgy.or.kr](http://www.artgy.or.kr)

816 Madu-dong, Ilsandong-gu, Goyang, Gyeonggi

**Daegu Opera House** [www.daeguoperahouse.org](http://www.daeguoperahouse.org)

15 Hoam-ro, Buk-gu, Daegu

**Daejeon Culture and Arts Center** [www.djac.or.kr](http://www.djac.or.kr)

135 Dunsan-daero, Seo-gu, Daejeon

**Sori Arts Center of Jeollabuk-do** [www.sori21.co.kr](http://www.sori21.co.kr)

31 Sori-ro, Deokjin-gu, Jeonju, North Jeolla

## CREDITS

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