Dynamic Korean Percussion: Samulnori

UMD Korean Percussion Ensemble
Sebastian Wang, director

Guest musicians:
Chunseung Lee, Sanghyuk Park, Sangyeol Lee: Korean percussion
Soyeun Jung (“Washington Gayageum”)

INTRODUCTION

Moon Goot/Binari

Sebastian Wang
Chunseung Lee, Sanghyuk Park, Sangyeol Lee

Udari Samulnori

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Samdo Sul Changgo

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Gayageum Sanjo

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Samdo Nongak Garak

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Program is approximately one hour with no intermission.
ABOUT THE PROGRAM

Moon Goot
Moon Goot can be loosely translated as “Gate Ritual.” In the old days, traveling troupes of farmers’ bands would bless a village before entering the village gates. They would do so by chanting to the gods, asking them for good fortune and blessings for the village and its people. Then the performers would enter the gates in a parade and bring joy to all with their music and talents.

Udtari Samulnori
Udtari Samulnori features the styles and rhythms unique to Kyonggi and Chungcheon provinces. The rhythms originate from the different farmers’ band music from these two areas. This piece features very colorful and dynamic use of the lead brass instrument, a small hand-held gong known as a kkwaenggwari. In the middle of the piece, two kkwaenggwari are played at the same time, and they interact with each other as well as with the rest of the group.

Samdo Sul Changgo
Samdo Sul Changgo highlights the hourglass-shaped drum, the changgo. All players are playing this instrument, using rhythms from all three major provincial areas in Korea. Each style is unique and is featured in different movements in the piece. The piece starts with the slow rhythm, gutgeori, and ends with the fast and exciting rhythm, hwimori.

Gayageum Sanjo
The gayageum is a famous traditional Korean instrument with 12 strings. It has been used in all types of Korean traditional music. The sound of gayageum is pure and soft, and at times sorrowful. Its sound makes it one of the most popular Korean traditional instruments. The gayageum’s strings can be adjusted to play different styles of music. These styles traditionally represent different parts of nature. Sanjo, literally meaning “scattered melodies,” is a style of traditional Korean music, involving an instrumental solo accompanied by drumming on the changgo. The composition of sanjo varies depending on the person, instrument and time. However, usually

ABOUT SAMULNORI

Samulnori is a contemporary Korean traditional performing art that was developed in 1978. The genre’s title literally means the “playing of four things.” The four instruments are the changgo (hourglass-shaped drum), buk (barrel drum), jing (large gong) and kkwaenggwari (small gong). Samulnori traces its roots to the traditional farmers’ band music that has been central to rural life in Korea for centuries. These musical patterns and rhythms were taken out of their original contexts, restyled and redesigned to be performed on a stage. Samulnori’s popularity has been immense, and it has been performed and taught throughout Korea as well as all over the world.
sang starts with a slow *jinyangjo* rhythm (very slow rhythm) and becomes faster, ending with a very fast rhythm such as *dannori* and creating enthusiasm for the audience. It starts with a slow rhythm, so the audience can gradually sink into the melody of the song. *Sanjo* expresses various aspects of the player’s skill.

**Samdo Nongak Garak**
As one of the staples in the repertory of *samulnori*, this piece’s title can be translated as “Farmer’s Band Rhythms of the Three Provincial Areas.” It showcases various styles and movements unique to the different types of farmers’ band music from the three major provincial areas in Korea. The final section features two *kkwaenggwari* players performing together while interacting with the other instruments. This is followed by a short poem that is chanted:

> Look to the Sky, Gather the Stars, Look to the Earth, Farm the Land,  
> This Year was Bountiful, We Pray for a Fruitful One Next Year,  
> Moon, Moon, Bright Moon, As Bright as Day,  
> In the Darkness Your Light, Gives us Illumination!

**about the artists**

Director **Sebastian Wang** was born in Washington DC and has lived in Maryland most of his life. Wang encountered *samulnori* when he was six years old and started taking private lessons when he was nine. He started to play with a group when he was 14, performing at various local universities as well as at The Kennedy Center. After graduating from high school, Wang continued his studies at The Korea National University of Arts in Seoul, Korea, under the renowned *samulnori* master Kim Duk Soo. After graduating from the university, Wang returned to the states and began teaching and performing in the local Washington DC area.

**UMD Korean Percussion Ensemble**
The UMD Korean Percussion Ensemble was formed in 2009 under the leadership of Dr. Robert Provine, Professor Emeritus in ethnomusicology at UMD, specializing in Korean music. The ensemble is one of the newest ensemble courses in the ethnomusicology program at Maryland, and it has been receiving a great amount of support from the public as well as from the UMD community. In this class, students learn to play the *samulnori* instruments: the *changgo* (hourglass drum), *buk* (barrel drum), *kkwaenggwari* (small gong) and *jing* (large gong). This ensemble is the first of its kind in Maryland and one of few in the United States.

**Undergraduate Students**
Marence Edu, Minjoo Jeun, Bojun Kim, Hyosoo Kim, Saes Kim, Sungyun Kim, Huang-Chen Lee, Hojun Lee, Susann Shin, David Wallach, Rebekah Williams

**Graduate Students**
Nathanial Gailey-Schiltz, Victor Hernandez Sang, Benjamin Jackson, Hannah Rogers, Hyunjin Yeo
Soyeun Jung is a graduate of Dankook University with a degree in traditional Korean music. She was the grand prizewinner of the Second Annual National Gayageum Competition. In addition, Jung was a soloist in the National Rising Star Concert in Korea, a lecturer at Chungnam Arts High School and a gayageum performer in the Cheonan City Korean Music Orchestra. Jung has performed all over the world in such countries as the United States, Great Britain, Japan and South American countries. She currently performs and teaches gayageum under the name “Washington Gayageum” in the Washington DC area.

Born in Seoul, Korea, Chunseung Lee is a professional musician with expertise in traditional Korean percussion instruments. Lee earned a BA degree in Korean Traditional Music at Chung-Ang University with highest honors. While he lived in Korea, Lee appeared on major performing events including the 2002 FIFA World Cup Opening Ceremony in Seoul and numerous television shows. Furthermore, Lee served as a senior percussionist in the Ansan City Traditional Orchestra. In 2006, Lee founded the New York Korean Traditional Marching Band, Inc. (NYKTMB). He teaches many young Korean-Americans about Korean culture and traditional music. As he was in Korea, Lee is highly active and participates in many events in the U.S. to introduce Korean culture to Americans. One of his most notable achievements is the first place at the 2011 World Korean Traditional Performing Art Competition in New York.