ABOUT THE LEFT BANK QUARTET

EVELYN ELSSING holds two degrees from the University of Michigan and she also studied at The Juilliard School. Her piano trio, Ecco Trio, concertized for many years in the United States and Japan. She is a professor of cello and the Barbara K. Steppel Memorial Faculty Fellow at the University of Maryland School of Music.

SALLY McCLAIN graduated with distinction from Indiana University. As a member of the Potomac String Quartet, she recently completed a five-year recording project of the 12 quartets of David Diamond.

KATHERINE MURDOCK, a graduate of Yale University, served for six years as a member of the Mendelssohn Quartet and is currently violist with the Los Angeles Quartet. She is a member of the faculty of the University of Maryland School of Music.

DAVID SALNESS attended the Cleveland Institute of Music and graduated from the Curtis Institute. He was a member of the Audubon Quartet from 1985 to 1997 and is currently professor of violin and Head of Chamber Music Activities at the University of Maryland School of Music.

These four musicians, with their diverse and colorful backgrounds, came together through the auspices of the Theater Chamber Players, and rather unexpectedly discovered the joys of a vibrant and enthusiastic collaboration. They have been The Left Bank Quartet since 1999, taking their name from the fact that the Kennedy Center, their first regular venue, is situated on the left bank of the Potomac River.

Their combined experiences include participation in the major festivals of the musical world — Aspen, Banff, Chautauqua, Marlboro, Mostly Mozart, Prussia Cove, Ravinia, Santa Fe, Spoleto and Yellow Barn, to name just a few. Their teaching experiences, collaborations, national and international tours, recital and concerto performances, and success in international competitions give this quartet a rich and varied tapestry as they weave their musical message.

The Left Bank Quartet’s repertoire encompasses an eclectic range, with quartets of composers such as Chavez, Crumb, Dukás, Dutilleux, Ginastera, Jalbert, Kirchner, Kurtag, Korngold, Ligeti, Merilainen, Nancarrow and Revueltas augmenting the standard fare. Compositions written for and premiered by the quartet include Mark Wilson’s Time Variations (Capstone Records) and String Quartet No. 4 by Lawrence Moss, recently released on the Innova label. Gramophone magazine’s review praised the composition for its “charm” and “dazzle,” stating, “Moss uses the instruments with idiomatic mastery, ranging from kittenish endearments to electric flashes of energy … played by the Left Bank Quartet with brilliant focus and timbral variety … .”
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 for performance 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.
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 village spirits, 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.

Utdari Samulnori

“Utdari Samulnori” features the styles and rhythms unique to Kyeonggi and Chungcheong provinces. The basic rhythmic patterns 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, interacting 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 the performers 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 rhythmic pattern, gutgeori, and ends with the fast and exciting pattern, hwimori.

Gayageum Sanjo

The gayageum is a famous traditional Korean long zither with 12 strings. It has been used in many types of Korean traditional music. The sound of the 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, and 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 performance varies depending on the person, instrument and time available. However, usually sanjo starts with the jinyangjo rhythmic pattern (very slow) and becomes gradually faster, ending with a very fast rhythmic pattern such as datemori, creating increasing enthusiasm in the audience. Miss Han will be playing a sanjo in the school of the great performer, Kim Jukpa.

Samdo Nongak Garak

This piece’s title can be translated as “Farmers’ Band Rhythms of the Three Provincial Areas.” It showcases the various styles and movements unique to the different types of farmers’ band music from the three major provincial areas in Korea. The final section contains two kkwaenggwari players performing together while interacting with the other instruments.

ABOUT THE DIRECTOR

Director SEBASTIAN WANG was born in Washington DC and has lived in Maryland most of his life. He 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, he continued his studies at The Korean 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.

ABOUT THE ENSEMBLE

The UMD Korean Percussion Ensemble was formed in 2009 under the leadership of Dr. Robert Provine, now Professor Emeritus here at UMD and a specialist 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
Sarah Bao, Min Yong Choi, Connor Fogle, Ji Hye Hwang, Min Ji Kang, Michael Sinni, Frederique Thompson, Justin Yoon, Ranzhu Zhao

Graduate Students
Benjamin Blocksom, Anthony Law, Thomas Liddle, Alice Rogers

Gayageum master JISUN HAN was born in Pohang in 1981 and was raised in Seoul, Korea. She started to learn the gayageum (traditional plucked zither) at the age of 17. In 2000, she was admitted to Suwon University as top of the class as a Traditional Korean Music major. In 2009, she graduated from the Graduate School of Traditional Culture at the SookMyung Women’s University. She joined the SookMyung Gayageum Orchestra in 2006, and has performed the gayageum actively not only in Korea but also overseas. Moreover, she has performed in various recordings including “For You,” “Lovely Gayageum,” “Singing & Dancing” and “Una Furtiva Lagrima.” Currently, she performs as a freelance gayageum musician in the United States.