



University of Maryland School of Music Presents

THE UMD KOREAN PERCUSSION ENSEMBLE
featuring Washington Samulnori and Great Circle

Thursday, April 27, 2023 • 8PM

KAY THEATRE

AT THE CLARICE SMITH PERFORMING ARTS CENTER



**SCHOOL OF
MUSIC**

University of Maryland School of Music Presents

The UMD Korean Percussion Ensemble featuring Washington Samulnori and Great Circle

UMD Korean Percussion Ensemble

Sebastian Wang, Music Director

Youngnam NongakAnonymous

Washington Samulnori

Sebastian Wang, Music Director

Samdo Nongak Garak.....Anonymous

Great Circle

Robin Ghertner, Music Director

A Forest Walk Robin Ghertner

The Rain Falls Robin Ghertner

SEBASTIAN WANG was born in Washington, D.C. 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 perform with a group when he was 14, performing at various local universities as well as the Kennedy Center. After graduating from high school, he continued his study at The Korea National University of Arts in Seoul, Korea under renowned Samulnori founder and master Kim Duk Soo. After graduating from the university, Sebastian returned to the states and began teaching and performing in the local Washington, D.C. area. He is also the executive director of Washington Samulnori, a local professional Samulnori group based in the Washington D.C. area.

THE UMD KOREAN PERCUSSION ENSEMBLE was formed in 2009 under the leadership of Robert Provine, UMD Ethnomusicology professor emeritus specializing in Korean music. The ensemble is one of the one of newer courses in the Ethnomusicology department at the University of Maryland, College Park and has been receiving a great amount of support from the UMD community as well as the public. In this class, students learn to play Samulnori, Korean traditional percussion, and learn one of four instruments: the changgo (hourglass-shaped drum), the buk (barrel drum), the jing (large gong) and the kkwaenggwari (small gong). This ensemble is the first of its kind in Maryland and one of few in the United States.

WASHINGTON SAMULNORI is a professional Korean traditional percussion performing troupe, dedicated to performing and preserving “Samulnori.” The Korean words “sa” and “mul” mean “four things,” and “nori” means “to play.” In the case of Samulnori, it refers to the four musicians playing four different types of percussive instruments: the changgo (hourglass-shaped drum), the buk (barrel drum), the jing (large gong) and the kkwaenggwari (small gong). The origins of their music can be traced to farmers’ band music (“nong-ak”) and ceremonial music. The repertoire of Samulnori also integrates the influences of folk and religious music and their intricate rhythms have become quite uniquely their own.

Founded in 2015 by director Sebastian Wang, Washington Samulnori consists of local professional musicians who specialize in Samulnori. Wang hopes to promote and teach Samulnori with this group and prolong the future and livelihood of Samulnori in the United States.

Founded by Robin Ghertner in 2023, **GREAT CIRCLE** is a new project integrating elements of jazz and traditional Korean rhythms and song forms. Over a decade in the making, the group brings together performers steeped in Korean and African American musical traditions offering sensitivity, mutual respect, and, above all, the joy that is central to both cultures. Based in the D.C. metro area, Great Circle hopes by combining disparate musical forms, the unity behind all human cultures can be realized. The pieces performed by the ensemble are original compositions by Robin Ghertner.

Youngnam Nongak

Youngnam Nongak is one of the staple pieces in the Samulnori repertory. This piece features the rhythms of the Youngnam provincial area. These rhythms have a certain military style to it that puts emphasis on repetition and strength. During the middle of the performance, a short poem 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!

Samdo Nongak Garak

One of the most popular staple repertoire of Samulnori, 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. These various rhythms are performed on all four traditional instruments. The final section features two kkweanggwari players performing together while interacting with the other instruments.

PERSONNEL

UMD Korean Percussion Ensemble

Sebastian Wang, *Music Director*

Alexis Ayuketah
 Anna DiRienzo
 Jackson Hawkins
 Cecilia Hu
 Michelle Ma
 Megan Miller
 Noa Nelson

Great Circle

Robin Ghertner, *Music Director*

Robin Ghertner and Sebastian Wang,
Korean Percussion
 Alfred Yun, *Piano*
 John Benskin, *Electric Bass*
 Brad Linde, *Saxophone*

Washington Samulnori

Sebastian Wang, *Music Director*

Sebastian Wang
 Robin Ghertner
 Hyunggoo Kang
 Yoonyoung Heo
 Jihwan Baek