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SamulNori: Korean Percussion for a Contemporary World

Keith Howard

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SAMULNORI: KOREAN PERCUSSION FOR A CONTEMPORARY WORLD

SamulNori: Korean Percussion for a Contemporary World

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This book began as a case study within the Australian Research Council Linkage Project, 'Sustainable futures for music cultures: Towards an ecology of musical diversity'. Directed from Queensland Conservatorium Research Centre, Griffith University, this enabled research to begin while I was Associate Dean at Sydney Conservatorium of Music, and writing to take place after I returned to SOAS, University of London. The Linkage Project supported the work of Hyelim Kim and Hyunseok Kwon in conducting interviews. A Senior Fellowship at the Academy of Korean Studies, Seongnam, Korea in 2014 enabled me to complete the manuscript during research leave from SOAS.

Nathan Hesselink conducted the three interviews and wrote the third part of Chapter 3, 'Early Voices in SamulNori's Historical Record', and part of the fourth part, 'Binding Themes'. Originally intended as part of his book, *SamulNori: Contemporary Korean Drumming and the Rebirth of Itinerant Performance Culture* (2012), space limitations meant that only excerpts could be sampled there. However, the interviews contain such valuable material that I feel they need to see the light of day in their entirety. I am grateful to Nathan for allowing me to print them here. The interviews are particularly poignant because one is with Kang Chunhyŏk, who sadly passed away in August 2014 – including his interview stands, in some small way, as a memorial to an inspiring manager and innovator. His role in the development of SamulNori is also charted in a number of the black and white photographs I include. Nathan and Nami Morris, both my former students, generously agreed to give thought-provoking interviews, which form the core of Chapter 7. Nathan is also the author of an important volume on a local percussion band tradition (2006) that will be much cited in the following pages, while Nami has since her pre-teen years been a disciple of the SamulNori hourglass drum player and founding member, Kim Duk Soo [Kim Tŏksu]. I have benefited immensely from accounts presented by Kim In Suk (on samulnori in the Korean school curriculum) and Simon Mills (on the use of samulnori on a Korean island) at a symposium held at SOAS, University of London, in April 2012, supported through the Academy of Korean Studies (KSPS) Grant funded by the Korean Government (MOE) (AKS-2011-BAA-2014). The same funds have supported the preparation of some notations and the inclusion of some photographs here.

Joo Jay-youn [Chu Chaeyŏn] solved what had seemed an insurmountable problem, when he provided a set of brilliant photographs, and I thank both him and the Space Theatre for letting me use wonderfully evocative images of SamulNori events old and new. During my Academy of Korean Studies' fellowship, I was able to attend a number of festivals and events, and I thank Kim Duk Soo and Yi

Kwangsu in particular for allowing me to take photographs at their festivals in Yesan and Ch'ilgok.

This book is a summation of almost 35 years of personal research, observation and participation. Over this extended period, I have referred to samulnori both specifically and tangentially in many of my publications. Bringing the material together in one volume means that I have here of necessity repeated previously published material; this is particularly pertinent in respect to one earlier book (Howard 2006c), where I began to formulate my thoughts about the genre. Some material derives from that book and a number of articles (particularly Howard 1983a/b, 1991/2).

I first encountered the first quartet, SamulNori, in 1982, when I came across the quartet at the National Theatre rehearsing for their first foreign tour. The theatre was then the home of the National Gugak Centre, where I was taking lessons. I became a regular audience member at the Space Theatre, one of the key venues for early SamulNori performances. My sponsor for doctoral fieldwork between 1982 and 1984 was the late musicologist Han Manyŏng, then a Seoul National University professor but who, as director of the National Gugak Centre (then known in English as the National Classical Music Institute), recruited Kim Yongbae, one of the founding SamulNori members, to establish a new samulnori quartet at the Centre. Back in Britain, I worked with the British agency Arts Worldwide as SamulNori's tour manager in 1985, at a time when Kim Yongbae's place had been taken by Kang Minsŏk. Kang and I shared an hourglass drum teacher, Kim Pyŏngsŏp, though while Kang had worked with Kim in Chŏlla Province, I had known him only later, after he settled in Seoul. I was still taking regular lessons from Kim Pyŏngsŏp in 1983 when I turned on my cassette recorder and asked if I could ask him for his take on SamulNori. This was several years after Kim had been one of the musicians the quartet had turned to when in 1979 they developed their piece '*Honam nongak*'. I again acted as tour manager for SamulNori in 1987, when the quartet was invited to return to Britain by the Arts Council of England's Contemporary Music Network. That same year, I attended a summer camp led by the Centre's samulnori quartet at Kangnŭng on Korea's East Coast; this was after the death of Kim Yongbae, and as the quartet settled on their second-generation line-up.

In 1988, I published my first notation of samulnori repertoire, creating a partial account of their four hourglass drum piece, '*Samdo sŏl changgo*', based on recordings I had made during their 1987 concerts in Britain (revised and included in Chapter 2 here). I used this and further notations to train a group of students and others at the University of Durham in 1988 and 1989. This group, consisting of Keiran Cheung, Steve Gibbs, Rebecca Mooney, Hugh Nankeville and Jonathan Thorpe, was invited to perform at a festival organised by SamulNori in July 1990. When the festival was postponed, the group and I were offered daily lessons for three weeks by the Centre's samulnori team. This led me to prepare a new notation for the rather different '*Samdo sŏl changgo*' performed at the Centre, as well as notations for additional pieces, which we performed back in Britain in

1991 (two of these are included in Chapters 2 and 5 below, previously published in Howard 2006c). I began to teach samulnori at SOAS, University of London, in 1992, taking student teams to later samulnori festivals in 1995 and 1997, and dispatching a further team in 2000. Funding to enable us to attend festivals came from a number of sources: SamulNori (and SamulNori Hanullim), the National Gugak Centre, the British Council, the British Chamber of Commerce in Korea, the Korean Residents Association in Britain, and the Korean Overseas Information Service.

During the last 35 years I have been privileged to know many musicians as friends, and I wish here to record my gratitude for the time so many have given, for the access I have had to private materials, and for the willingness of so many to answer my ignorant questions and to patiently coach me as I have stumbled through the samulnori repertory. Chief amongst these are, of course, Kim Duk Soo, Yi Kwangsu, Ch'oe Chongshil, Kang Minsok and Ch'oe Pyŏngsam, along with those named individually in the text below. Beyond these I owe a considerable debt to too many to name individually: thank you, one and all.

SamulNori, at the Space Theatre, 1981. (Photo: Space Theatre)

Introduction

SamulNori is a quartet of Korean percussionists that first performed together on stage in February 1978. The quartet's name, coined a few months later by the Korean folklorist Shim Usŏng, means 'four things play'. SamulNori rapidly gained considerable popularity, so much so that many additional groups emerged, and the distinct repertory and style of performance fostered by SamulNori spawned a genre, samulnori. Note the convention I will adopt throughout this book: SamulNori for the original quartet, retaining the romanised spelling that they favour, but samulnori, without initial capitals, for the genre.[1]

Today, samulnori is, arguably, Korea's most successful traditional music. There are many dozens of amateur and professional samulnori groups. Most groups are private, but a number are based at the state-funded National Gugak Centre in Seoul and in its satellite facilities around the country. There is an abundance of samulnori workshops, festivals and contests. Samulnori is taught in many state schools as well as in dedicated institutes. It features, to an extent, in the state-sanctioned school curriculum, particularly at middle school level, and there are many workbooks dedicated to helping wannabee 'samulnorians'.[2] Abroad, samulnori is a familiar part of Korean performance troupes and Korean diasporic activities, and samulnori groups exist in many universities, particularly where there are substantial Korean or Korean heritage student populations.

The quartet, SamulNori, and the repertoire, samulnori, are recent evolutions of something much older. Antecedents are encountered in local percussion bands, known under the umbrella terms of *nongak* and *p'ungmul* and preserved as an icon from Korea's past as Important Intangible Cultural Property (*Chungyo muhyŏng munhwajae*) 11, and in itinerant percussion troupes, notably Namsadang, preserved as Important Intangible Cultural Property 3. Percussion bands are iconic to the Korean soundscape. Popular opinion, as reported in one English-language Korean newspaper, is that: 'First was Samul, and everywhere was rhythm, in percussion bands, shaman rituals, and other traditional music' (*Korea Herald*, 25 January 1997). The first written document routinely cited by Korean commentators to indicate a long history is the Chinese third-century source, *Sanguo zhi*. This

[1] Rightly, the McCune-Reischauer romanisation reflecting the term's normative Korean pronunciation would be *samullori* (Korean pronunciation elides 'l+n' to give 'l+l'), but using this here would introduce unnecessary complication. Given the number of competing romanisation systems for Korean, additional alternatives may be encountered in texts and on the Internet.

[2] A term coined by the SamulNori quartet for students and participants at their festivals and contests.

relates how the people of Mahan in the Korean peninsula (roughly, today's central Ch'ungch'ŏng and southwestern Chŏlla provinces) danced at night, stamping the ground and clapping to set rhythms (cited by, amongst many others, Kim Yang-gon 1967: 5). Interpretation is required if one is to argue that this pertains to percussion bands. However, more than a millennium later, Chosŏn dynasty court records offer clear indications from, for instance, the eighteenth century, of what appear to be similar activities: '[Farmers] cheered those working or harvesting … with [small and large] gongs!' 'When there are some farmers who are not active enough while everyone is working hard … metallic gongs are sounded to cheer them up' (cited in Shin 1985a: 7–8).[3] When Americans toured Korea at the beginning of the twentieth century looking for trade opportunities, they similarly found farming work accompanied by drums and gongs, as the following excerpt taken from a 1906 document, the *Report on Agricultural Products of Korea*, illustrates:

> If there is anything which took us by surprise in the farming methods of Koreans … We witnessed that music is played and singing is done to encourage the weeding work. Walking around the countryside in the weeding season in summer, one hears the sound of gongs … Some farmers change from weeding to musical instruments and start playing exciting strains for the workers.[4]

The association of percussion with pre-modern Korea remains in contemporary takes on mythology and folklore, such as the following, written by Zo Zayong [Cho Chayong] to celebrate the tenth anniversary of the founding of SamulNori:

> A long, long time ago there lived deep in the mountains … goblins who loved to play uproariously on drums and gongs every night. Their unceasing banging and pummelling earned them the nickname '*duduri*' from the Korean verb 'to beat' or 'to strike' (Zo 1988: 38–9).

Zo (1926–2000) was a champion of Korean folklore.[5]

Today, domestic and foreign concerts of Korean troupes routinely end with a full company dance to drums and gongs that the audience is encouraged to join in with. Equally, and for decades, demonstrations by Korean workers and students have been choreographed to drums and gongs (see, e.g., Catherine In-young Lee 2012). At the 2010 World Cup in South Africa, the 'red devil' supporters of the South Korean team challenged the dominance of plastic *vuvuzela* trumpets with drums and gongs. Again, drums and gongs were much in evidence at the

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[3] The original sources are *Sŭngjŏngwŏn ilgi, kwŏn* (chapter or fascicle) 881, and *Yŏngjo shillok*, *kwŏn* 47. The first of these, documents from the Royal Secretariat, dates to 1737, while the second dates to 1738, the fourteenth year of Yŏngjo's reign (r.1724–1776).

[4] Cited from Howard (1990: 234).

[5] http://zozayong.com/ (accessed 2 April 2014) celebrates Zo's life and work; see also Deutsch (1997).

2002 World Cup in Seoul (and in Japan).[6] Much the same punctuates almost any Korean festival or sporting event and features in almost any dance production. Back in 1993, 1,100 drummers created aural mayhem at the Taejŏn EXPO in what they termed the 'Big Bang SamulNori'. This was an evolution of the massive percussion display at the opening ceremony of the 1988 Seoul Olympics, which in turn had developed from large Korean percussion forces deployed for Paik Nam June's *Bye Bye Kipling* at the 1986 Beijing Asian Games. The original plan for the Seoul Olympics was for percussion bands to accompany performers and VIPs in a 20-minute procession from the riverside dock to the Olympic stadium in Chamshil, joining as a 1,252-drummer 'passage at dawn' within the opening ceremony. Scaled down, the mass drummers at the event, who were made up largely of military conscripts, took to multiple sets of the four characteristic percussion band drums and gongs (Dilling 2007: 29–31).[7]

SamulNori/samulnori uses the four core instruments of local percussion bands. These are the 'four things' (*samul*) referred to in the name itself, although the meaning of the Sino-Korean characters behind the two syllables, which in earlier times had a Buddhist connotation and applied to different percussive instruments typically found at Korean temples, is extended with the new genre. '*Nori*', the purely Korean second half of the name, has the meaning 'to play'. The four SamulNori/samulnori instruments are the *kkwaenggwari* small hand-held gong, the *changgo* (or *changgu*) double-headed hourglass-shaped drum, the *puk* squashed barrel drum and the *ching* large hand-held gong. Most of the SamulNori/samulnori repertory is performed seated, while local bands once stood and danced; hence, where in local bands the large gong would be held by a rope or cord in one hand, in samulnori it is normally hung in a frame. For most of the samulnori repertory one of each instrument is played, although in specific pieces the quartet will take four hourglass drums or two players will take small gongs. There were leaders of each instrument in both local percussion bands and itinerant troupes, and such bands and troupes typically had ranks of performers for each instrument. In performance, the small gong gave rhythmic models, the large gong the underpinning foundations, and the barrel drum accented and expanded on the large gong foundations. This is much as it happens today in samulnori, but samulnori tends to foreground the hourglass drum and its player rather than the small gong and its player. In part this reflects the fame and popularity of one particular hourglass drum player, one of the founder members of the first SamulNori quartet, Kim Duk Soo (b.1952).[8] However, the shift in focus also reflects the drum's potential to feature complex patterning, and its ability to demonstrate greater virtuosity than

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[6] Korean percussion bands were dispatched around the world prior to the 2002 World Cup; one of my then doctoral students, Simon Mills, filmed a band performing on the pitch before a Crystal Palace football match at Selhurst Park in September 2001.

[7] See also Dilling 2007: Chapter 1 *passim*; 263–4 and Chapter 6 *passim*.

[8] Kim Tŏksu would be the McCune-Reischauer romanisation. Here, and throughout the text, I use personal preferred spellings where the person concerned is well known abroad,

the other instruments. This becomes important in a genre such as samulnori, since it was developed specifically for staged performance. In samulnori, the hourglass drum player uses, as he/she has since at least the middle of the twentieth century in local bands and itinerant troupes, two sticks: a thin whip-like *yŏl ch'ae* to echo the small gong and a mallet-like *kunggul ch'ae* or *kung ch'ae* to fill in the large gong foundations.

Samulnori is rhythm. It is my view that the focus on rhythm challenges many of the assumptions about musical structures that pertain to Western popular and art music based on harmony and melody, and demands distinct analytical tools well removed from those that prevail in musicology (Howard 1991/2; see also Barker 2011, 2015). One piece of the samulnori repertory continues to be performed standing and dancing, and in this a small hand-held drum, the *sogo*, is added to the quartet of instruments. A melodic instrument can also appear: the shawm known as *hojŏk* or *soaenap*, *nallari* or *t'aep'yŏngso* – where *hojŏk* denotes an origin that allies the instrument to the 'barbaric' tribes on China's western borders, *soaenap* indicates the metal bell, *nallari* is onomatopoeia for the strident nasal sound the shawm produces and *t'aep'yŏngso* translates as 'great peace pipe'. The shawm player improvises around known tunes, keeping to the rhythmic frame given by the percussion quartet.

Each samulnori piece is compact in the sense that each comprises a fixed and tightly controlled series of discrete episodes. An episode is built from a single rhythmic cycle that typically has the duration of a single metric measure, but which may include a sequence of motifs built from a set of variant patterns based on the rhythmic cycle frame, played end to end. Variant patterns add additional notes, increase texture density, and gradually up the tempo in a kaleidoscope of colour. Each pattern comprises a set of small units, typically binary or ternary cells. Every episode in a *samulnori* piece ultimately derives from local band or itinerant troupe repertory from the past, and will be juxtaposed with other episodes from the same repertory or from different sources. In other words, the sequence of episodes within any given piece juxtaposes discrete patterns that once functioned for one or more ritual, entertainment and/or work activity in one or more Korean area or region. The result is a bricolage, but one in which each piece exhibits an over-arching structural unity. Each piece, however, requires players to develop fluency and a shared aesthetic that moves beyond instrumental technique to incorporate breathing and body movement. In contrast, local percussion bands and itinerant troupes had (and have) larger memberships that tended (and tend) to accommodate performers with very different skill levels. Bands and troupes presented (and present) music that was (and is) more expansive, less fast, less virtuosic, and, in terms of rhythmic variation, more flexible. There was (and to an extent, still is) less of a shared breathing and movement aesthetic. Older incarnations, though, struggle to fit onto proscenium stages, unlike samulnori.

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but retain the East Asian order of family name before given name rather than complicate matters further by switching to the Western order with family name last.

Performing Samulnori

Samulnori is, essentially, urban. Percussion bands and itinerant troupes date from a time when the majority of the population lived and worked in the countryside. The decline of bands and troupes can be mapped onto modernisation and urbanisation, aspects that in Korea date largely from post-Korean War economic expansion. So, samulnori evolved as part of a concert culture intended to appeal to the rapidly growing middle class population of urban centres such as Seoul. This population was becoming increasingly affluent, and while it collected the accoutrements of modernity it paused for breath, developing nostalgia for a past that was fast being lost. In a nutshell, I argue that Koreans have in recent decades bought into a perceived need to bring traditional music to the public in formats and at venues designed on the basis of – and therefore to compete alongside – Western equivalents.

With state support, notably through the government-funded National Gugak Centre (in Korean, both under its current and former English names, the Kungnip Kugagwŏn), efforts had been made through much of the later twentieth century to stage age-old court and literati musics of the 'high' tradition (to use a term familiar from discussions of cultural production and consumption throughout East Asia). But, it was felt that new ways to present folk music – the 'low' tradition – in comparable formats were needed. Hence, performance spaces that were built in Seoul during the later decades of the twentieth century needed to accommodate both the grandiose – Western ballet and opera, with Korean equivalents being *ch'anggŭk* opera and its relations[9] as evolutions of the more traditional *p'ansori* epic storytelling through song, new orchestras of traditional instruments, and so on – and the more intimate solo instrumental and vocal recitals and chamber groups. The new showcase performance spaces opened as palaces to modernity, but they needed to partner the grandiose with something more intimate. Hence, the three Seoul performance complexes built in the 1970s, the Sejong Cultural Centre (Sejong Munhwa Hoegwan), the National Theatre (Kungnip Kŭkch'ang) and the Korean Culture and Arts Foundation's Munye Theatre (Munye Kŭkch'ang; today, the ARKO Theatre) all had both large and compact performance spaces. Rural percussion bands and itinerant troupes had traditionally played in large outdoor venues; they were destined to struggle to fit onto theatre stages.

Much of Korea's musical tradition is appropriate to intimate environments, and this was only partly accommodated as the urban middle class patronised the new performance complexes. An increasing number of small and typically private performance spaces opened, to provide alternative venues. One such venue was the Space Theatre (Konggan Sarang), built between the former royal gardens of Piwŏn (often romanised as 'Biwon') and the lively artistic quarter of Insadong (once known to a generation of foreigners as 'Mary's Alley'). It was here that SamulNori first took to the stage.

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[9] For which, see Killick (2010).

From Seoul, the genre of samulnori spread outwards. At home, its popularity was aided by the next stage of the development of concert culture, which involved building regional cultural centres. Regional centres required 'acts' to fill their stages. The new genre was also promoted through festivals, workshops, and the production of recordings and notation-based workbooks. It was taken up by regional schools and by groups, particularly where the local percussion bands of old had died out. Abroad, it became part of the burgeoning international concert scene for non-Western music: samulnori was found to be immensely approachable in a way that other genres of Korean music were not. In writing this, I have in mind Orientalism as it was conceived of by Edward Said, wherein the 'Other' is matched to the familiar,[10] and in which rhythm as an irreducible part of the body and through which humankind experiences the world[11] proved less challenging than unfamiliar melodic and modal soundworlds.

As music for a quartet, samulnori proved eminently portable. It was ideally suited to indoor stages, and was sufficiently compact to fit small stages (even if extremely loud!). It neatly fit the presentation aspects of contemporary urban concert culture, and did so far better than the repertories of local percussion bands and itinerant troupes. However, as much as it was readily appreciable by a broader cross-cultural audience than other Korean folk and court music genres, at home it was often considered to stand at a considerable remove from older forms. This was particularly so amongst local musicians and amongst students who associated themselves with the *minjung munhwa* popular culture movement that fought for democracy against the military dictatorships of the 1970s and 1980s. I will argue below that this distancing was exacerbated because much journalism and scholarship allied the original SamulNori quartet to itinerant troupes. Coupled to an academic discourse that at times evoked notions of Hobsbawm's 'invented traditions' (1983) or, to use Andrew Killick's phrase, notions of the 'traditionesque' (Killick 2003, 2010: xxi and 213), this set up a paradox in which the very popularity of samulnori

[10] After Edward Said (1978). The conceptions I refer to here are those applied to music in many of the chapters in Martin Clayton and Bennett Zon's edited volume, *Music and Orientalism in the British Empire, 1780s–1940s* (2007); much the same would apply to Timothy Taylor's (2007) understanding of consumerist 'world music'. See also Howard (2009a), in which my theoretical understanding of world music is outlined, using a framework that challenges the world systems' models of William Outhwaite and Immanuel Wallerstein.

[11] Without wishing to confuse biological and perceptual conceptions of rhythm, or to somehow validate Carl Sachs's pithy paraphrase of van Bulow ('in the beginning was rhythm'; Sachs 1953), a somewhat simplistic and antiquated citation from Carl Seashore would seem to be appropriate: 'Rhythm, whether in perception or action, is emotional when highly developed, and results in the response of the whole organism to its pulsations. When we listen to the dashing billows or the trickling raindrops, when we see the swaying of trees in the wind or the waving of wheat fields, we respond to these, we feel ourselves into them, and there is rhythm everywhere, not only in every plastic part of our body' (Seashore 1938). I have elsewhere discussed Korean conceptions of rhythm (Howard 2006a).

was challenged by questioning its authenticity. And moving to the present, this, as I will argue, adds a peculiar and problematic dimension to discussions of how the genre can be maintained and transmitted to future generations.

Samulnori has, though, proved immensely flexible. This, too, adds to the paradox. Quartets have collaborated with jazz musicians, singers and shaman ritualists. They have entered the Korean pop charts accompanying rap singers. They have adapted repertory developed for other ensembles or instruments and made it work on the four percussion instruments, and have premiered compositions for samulnori quartets and orchestras of Western and Korean instruments. An intriguing example of adaptation is the samulnori piece '*Samdo sŏl changgo*', which substantially differs in structure from drum dances that previously were a part of the repertories of local bands and itinerant troupes, as well as from the drum dances performed from the early twentieth century onwards by pretty girls on urban stages. The piece is closely allied to the structure of another genre entirely, the solo melodic instrumental genre of *sanjo*.[12] Such a degree of flexibility and adaptability can challenge understandings of preservation and change that have become the zeitgeist of much cultural promotion today, and the arguments that persist between either preserving without change or maintaining a genre or style by allowing creativity and development (Howard 2012: 1–18). Is it, we could well ask in respect to samulnori, necessary for a canon of pieces to be sustained into the future or can, in the course of time, existing pieces be transformed into substantially new repertory influenced by different music genres with local and international roots?

Literature and Recordings

Korea is a highly literate culture, and its many prestigious universities produce copious quantities of scholarly publications. Despite this, although much has been written about SamulNori/samulnori precursors, many of the Korean sources published after the year 1978 when SamulNori made their debut have surprisingly continued to omit all mention of the contemporary quartet. This illustrates how persistent the scholarly questioning of the new genre's authenticity has proven to be. Publications on percussion bands that omit SamulNori/samulnori include Ch'oe Chongmin (2002), Ch'oe Sangsu (1985), Chŏn Inp'yŏng (1979), Chŏng Pyŏngho (1985, 1986, 1992), Chŏng Pyŏngho et al. (1982, 1985), Chu Yŏngja (1981, 1985),

[12] For an account of *sanjo*, see Howard, Lee and Casswell (2008). Kim Duk Soo has in recent years developed his own *changgo sanjo* for the hourglass drum. He has told me in conversation that he has recorded this, but has at the time of writing yet to release the recording. Earlier but shorter forays into such a piece, lacking structural similarity (that is, lacking the characteristic slow to fast progression within movements and from beginning to end, and lacking the multi-movement overall form of *sanjo* proper), are recorded on Kim Soochul's album, *Guitar Sanjo* (Living Sound 2002).

Han'guk hyangt'osa (1994, 1997), Kim Hyŏnsuk (1991), Kim Iktu et al. (1994), Kim Inu (1987), Kim Uhyŏn (1984), Kim Wŏnho (1999), Kim Yŏngt'ak (2002), Kwŏn Hŭidŏk (1981, 1995), No Kwangil (1985), No Poksun (1993), Ryu Muyŏl (1983, 1986), Shin Yong-ha (1985a/b), Yi Pohyŏng (1984), Yi Sangjin (2002) and Yi Sora and Chŏng Sumi (2000). SamulNori/samulnori also appears to be absent from many of the MA and PhD theses about percussion bands produced at Korean universities in the 1980s and 1990s, including An Hyeyŏng (1986), Ch'oe T'aeyŏl (1984), Kim Chiyŏng (1987), Kim Hakchu (1987), Kim Hyŏnsuk (1987), Kim Okhŭi (1985), O Chongsŏp (1989), Son Pyŏngu (1988), Sŏng Chaehyŏng (1984), U Chwamiyangja (1999), Yi Chongjin (1996), Yi Chŏngno (1998), Yi Yŏngbae (2000) and Yu Kyŏngok (1987).[13] Material on itinerant troupes tends to be focused on narrow accounts of troupe history, and so has little need to connect directly to the quartet. This is the case in most of the publications by Shim Usŏng (e.g., 1974a, 1974b, 1980, 1985, [Shim Woo-sung] 1997), although one of Shim's books (Shim 1998) and a volume written by Ch'oe T'aehyŏn (1993) do make explicit connections. Amongst non-Koreans, Robert C. Provine's work has focused on local percussion band music, and primarily on a solo drum dance learnt from a specific teacher, Kim Pyŏngsŏp (Provine 1975, 1982, 1985); the same repertory is considered by Chŏn Inp'yŏng (1979), Chu Yŏngja (1981, 1985), myself (Howard 1983a/b) and, although somewhat tangentially, in articles by the Ohio-based *p'ansori* singer, performer and scholar Chan E. Park (2011, 2012).

There is, nonetheless, a growing body of work on SamulNori/samulnori. This includes most importantly four volumes by Kim Hŏnsŏn (1988, 1991, 1995, 1998). SamulNori/samulnori members have produced books of notations and workbooks, including, from the founding quartet, three volumes plus one in English translation (Korean Conservatorium of Performing Arts/Han'guk chŏnt'ong yesul yŏnju pojonhoe 1990, 1992, 1993, 1995). Three volumes feature samulnori practice at the state-sponsored National Gugak Centre (Ch'oe Pyŏngsam 2000; Ch'oe Pyŏngsam and Ch'oe Hŏn 1992; Lee Young-Gwang 2009). Accounts of the genre by SamulNori members and associates include two associated with Kim Duk Soo's disciple Kim Dong-Won (Kim Duk Soo 1999; Kim Tongwŏn 2003[14]), two volumes celebrating the tenth anniversary of the quartet's first performance published by Art Space (1988a, 1988b), and a slim volume produced to celebrate the thirtieth anniversary (SamulNori Hannullim 2009).[15] There are a number of MA theses on the genre, which broadly speaking began to appear in the 1990s. These include Kim Taegyun (1990), Yu Munshik (1990), U Ch'ŏnmi (1996), Nam Soi (1997), Pang Sŭnghwan (1997), Yi Pŏmmin (1998), Kim Hyŏnsuk (1999).[16]

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[13] As cited by Shingil Park (2000) and Hesselink (2006).

[14] Note a further refinement of the convention I follow for personal names: I retain McCune-Reischauer romanisations where a cited publication is written only in Korean.

[15] Art Space was set up following the death of Kim Sugŭn (1931–1986), the founder of Space – and the Space Theatre – by his former colleagues and staff.

[16] As cited by Shingil Park (2000).

Many theses, and more than I have space to list here, were completed in the first decade of the new millennium, and some of them began to abandon the boundaries between the new genre and its antecedents; these provide the sources for Kim In Suk's research discussed in Chapter 5 below. Amongst non-Koreans, Nathan Hesselink and I have both published extensively on both local percussion bands and SamulNori/samulnori (e.g., Hesselink 1998a, 1998b, 1999, 2001a, 2001b, 2004, 2006, 2012; Howard 1983a/b, 1989a/b, 1990, 1991/92, 1997a, 2002, 2006a, 2006c). This book develops my earlier work and is indebted to Hesselink's recent account (2012), although Hesselink follows Shim Usŏng and Ch'oe T'aehyŏn in making a central link between SamulNori and itinerant troupes – a path that I am reluctant to follow.

The first commercial recording of samulnori was issued as a vinyl disc released in the USA in 1984, titled *Samul-Nori: Drums and Voices of Korea* (Nonesuch Explorer Series 72093). Later, this was released on LP and then on CD in Seoul (e.g., Oasis ORC-1041, 1991). This first album featured the four initial pieces premiered by the founding quartet. A second quartet, established at the National Gugak Centre and initially led by one of the founding quartet's former members, Kim Yongbae (1953–1986), recorded a cassette issued in Berlin as part of the Horizonte '85 Festival, then released an album in Seoul in April 1986, *Samulnori* (Jigu JCDS-0050). Both of these, and a series of subsequent recordings, feature the set of pieces that I identify within this volume as a samulnori canon. Additional recordings of the canon include: *SamulNori* (Sony 32DG64), recorded during the founding quartet's tour of Japan in 1986; *SamulNori* (SKC, SKCD-K-0326), released in 1987 and again a year later to mark the founding quartet's tenth anniversary; *Samulnori: A Selection of Korean Traditional Music Vol.20/ Samulnori. Han'guk ŭmak sŏnjip 20* (Jigu JCDS-0319–0320, 1992), on which it could be said that the National Gugak Centre's own samulnori team came of age; *National Classical Music Institute Samulnori/Samulnori: 93-iryo myŏngin myŏngch'angjŏn 3* (Cantabile SRCD-1186, 1994), based on live recordings made in 1993 at one of a series of concerts featuring 'master musicians and singers' and given a title that references an earlier name for the Centre; and *Kim Duk Soo SamulNori* (King SYNCD-114–115, 1995). This last, a double CD set, included six of the seven canonic pieces, and was intended to provide model performances of each, hence each was given in an extended format. It is no exaggeration to say that the performances on this double CD remain the yardsticks by which other musicians measure their own skills.

A multitude of other recordings exist that feature selected, often short, versions of canonic pieces. At times, these are used as cement, either to bind samulnori to other music worlds such as jazz or as fillers between more substantial improvised repertories. Briefly, this is what happens on the first three recordings that chart SamulNori's excursions into jazz collaborations: *SXL Live in Japan* (Terrapin 32DH824, 1987), *SXL: Into the Outlands* (Celluloid CELD5017, 1987), and *Red Sun/ SamulNori* (Amadeo 841 222-1, 1989, re-mastered as Polygram DZ-2433, 1997). A further album transferred lessons learnt from jazz back to the percussion frame,

SamulNori Record of Changes (CMP CD3002, 1988 and Rhizome Sketch RZF1002, 1989). Here, though, the glue was shaman and Buddhist ritual music rendered on the percussion instruments rather than the samulnori canon. Shaman influence is also apparent on SamulNori's single contribution to *A Week in the Real World – Part 1* (Real World/Virgin CDRW25, 1992). Put down during a week's residence at Peter Gabriel's recording studio following the quartet's appearance at the British WOMAD festival, this uses East Coast shaman ritual material. Shaman rituals proved a rich vein for the founding quartet, leading to a double CD release, *Spirit of Nature* (Nanjang TE004-01, 2001). Jazz collaborations provided another productive path, particularly in three additional albums produced during a decade-long partnership with the Austrian group Red Sun: *Then Comes the White Tiger* (ECM ECM-1499, 1994), *Nanjang: A New Horizon* (King Records KSC-4150A, 1995), and *From the Earth, to the Sky* (Samsung Music SCO-123ABN, 1997 and 1998).

Reflecting samulnori's considerable popularity, many other recordings exist, featuring music situated somewhere between canonic realisations and new creativity. Those featuring the group Durae Pae Samulnori are notable. Durae Pae's first album consisted primarily of compressed canonic renditions: *Samulnori. Durae Pae Samulnori: The Best Traditional Dance and Music Troupe of Korea* (Seorabul KCD-007, 1987). Standing at a certain distance from this, Durae Pae's second album mixed four canonic pieces with two newly composed tracks (*Durae-Pae Samulnori. Che-1 chip*; Sorimadang SCD-0008, 1993), while their third and fourth added synthesisers, guitars and backing vocals to create an easy listening sound that was at the time much in vogue following an easing of restrictions on imports that saw Koreans turn to New Age soundworlds (*Durae-Pae Samulnori. Che-2 chip* and *Che-3 chip*; Sorimadang SCD-0009–0010, 1993). Space militates against a more complete listing of recordings here, although more will be discussed as this volume progresses.

Conventions

The original quartet and the genre it spawned share a name, hence the convention adopted throughout this volume: SamulNori for the quartet, retaining the romanised spelling that they favour, but samulnori for the genre.

Where appropriate, I have adjusted the grammar of interview quotations in the belief that everyone we interview has the right for their words to be rendered adequately. I use British spellings. As with most publications by foreign scholars on Korea, but with the exceptions already noted, I use the McCune-Reischauer romanisation system for Korean terms, as modified by the Korean Ministry of Education in 1988 ('shi' rather than 'si', to reflect pronunciation). The accuracy of this system is such that it allows the ready substitution of Korean script and therefore makes a character glossary redundant; indeed, my reason to use McCune-Reischauer is to allow materials I have cited to be found in library collections and recorded music archives around the world. It also allows foreigners to attempt a

reasonable pronunciation of a Korean word or name.[17] Although I render personal names given in Korean in published sources in McCune-Reischauer, without hyphenation, I have respected preferred spellings of names where these are printed, where a composition, publication, or recording is distributed in the international market, or where the person is well known beyond Korea. Only if it would facilitate cross-checking do I add McCune-Reischauer equivalents in square brackets on the first occurrence of a person's name rendered using a different romanisation system. English titles to albums and pieces/recordings are left as printed; English translations are given only where these are provided in a publication or recording. Titles of compositions and pieces are given in parentheses, with the Korean preceding an English translation or transliteration where needed. 'Seoul' is the accepted romanisation for the South Korean capital city.

Like most non-Korean scholars, I remain reluctant to use the romanisation system that has been promoted from Seoul during the last decade. I do not dispute that this system works for Koreans, but it relies on syllabary that too often has unfortunate connotations for those brought up speaking European languages, with the effect that it can undermine efforts to promote Korea to an international audience. An example of this is the English name used by what is in Korean the Kungnip Kugagwŏn: National Gugak Centre. '*Kugak*', the McCune-Reischauer version of today's '*gugak*', avoids intimating American slang. I also note that there is as yet little consistency in the use of the 'new' romanisation, not least since there are a number of other systems still circulating. For example, consider the SamulNori/samulnori instruments: the *kkwaenggwari* can also be encountered as the *kwenggwari*, *kwengwari*, *k'wengwari* and much more (and also, because of the primary material used to produce the alloy from which it is made, as the *soe* ('iron') or *sangsoe* ('lead iron')); the three additional instruments are regularly rendered as *janggo/janggu*, *buk* and *jing*. Again, individually preferred spellings of personal names may follow any one of the systems that has existed during the last 60 years, or not at all, and, to complicate matters further, a composer or author may use several different romanised versions of their name, sometimes hyphenating the second and third syllables, sometimes eliding together and sometimes separating the syllables, sometimes giving an initial capital to the third syllable and sometimes not.

Finally, while in the pages below some notation will be encountered, those wishing to learn samulnori should refer to the three workbooks (with one also available in English) produced by SamulNori in the 1990s: Korean Conservatorium of Performing Arts/Han'guk chŏnt'ong yesul yŏnju pojonhoe 1990, 1992, 1993, 1995), to the three notation texts reflecting samulnori practice at the National

[17] At a recent auction, I bought a silk scarf. This was issued by the US Airforce to its pilots in 1951, during the Korean War, and it has a double-sided map of Korea printed on it. All the place names are printed in McCune-Reischauer romanisation, and I like to imagine that, if a pilot was shot down and had to make his way across enemy lines or to take shelter in a Korean village, at least he would have been able to pronounce the place names.