Chapter Ⅳ

Scattered Thoughts on Scattered Melodies: *Sanjo* in the 21st Century

Jocelyn Clark

In the early 1990s, I was sitting in the cafeteria of what was then called in English the "National Classical Music Institute" (NCKTPA, at present) with my *gayageum* teacher Ji Ae-ri and a cellist from North Carolina, Jonathan Kramer. Kramer, who was in Korea for the first time, as part of a group of American scholars and composers participating in a summer workshop on Korean traditional music, was studying *haegeum* (2-stringed fiddle) and was excited about everything he was hearing, *sanjo* in particular. "There should be a cello *sanjo*!" he exclaimed at one point, to which Ji Aeri promptly replied that there already was – Zoltán Kodály's "Sonata for Solo Cello." Certainly the opening sounds of Kodály's *Sonata* are reminiscent of the *ujo* melodic mode's "transparent and magnificent" sounds – "General Xiang Yu jumping on a horse bellows with rage and 10,000 soldiers were frightened out of their senses!" (Song B.S. 1980: 120) – and moments of the third movement seem to gallop in *hwimori* rhythm, particularly in comparison to the first and second movements. But is it *cello sanjo*?

The word *sanjo* and the "pure" Korean word *heoteun garak* – refer both to the genre's now almost mythic improvisational heyday and to what we know today as "classical music". The term decribes a from with its various organized schools, memorized patterns, and scores – was not always so narrowly circumscribed nor so highly regarded. As Professor Hwang Byeong-gi explained to the San Francisco-based Korean composer Na Hyo-shin, "when the Court musicians heard *sanjo* for the first time, they didn't think it was music, but thought it was more like scattered melodies. That's where the name *sanjo* came from... " (Na H.S. 2001: 58-9). Early usage of the word was thus pejorative. Composer Lee Geon-yong, senior professor at the Korean National University of Arts, incorporated *sanjo* into the title of one of his works for the first time in 1980. In his program note for *Phrygian Sanjo*, for five Bb clarinets, he explains:

> I used the word *sanjo* in the title of this piece, but not to mean anything other than an instrumental work. There are no *jangdan* [or rhythm patterns] and there are no improvisatorial aspects highlighted in the piece. On the contrary, I have developed and composed it with extreme care from beginning to end.[1]

In this way, perhaps we can also apply the term *sanjo* more broadly to mean, without prejudice, "scattered modes," *Phrygian* or *gyemyeonjo*, major or minor.

In 1999, Pak Heung-ju, together with several others and himself as Artistic Director, established the *Sanjo* Festival in Jeonju with the purpose of discovering a *sanjo* for the 21st

century. In addition to Korean *sanjo* players, he invited jazz musicians, rock musicians, classical musicians, composers, and others to explore all possible permutations of what we might come to consider contemporary *sanjo* – from fretless bass "rock *sanjo*" to free jazz *shakuhachi* (Japanese vertical flute). In bringing together modern players to reinterpret the genre, Pak was working from the notion that *sanjo* is not just a set of "scattered modes," but that the genre also embodies the conditions that led to the formation and organization of those modes. Within *sanjo* we thus find not only the seed that took root and the plant that sprang forth in the 19th century, but also the soil in which the seed was planted and the climate that nurtured it. With changes in these conditions arose the possibility of new modes of expression for *sanjo* in the 21st century. The Jeonju Festival prorided a space in which to explore the possibilities.

Pak compared *sanjo*'s dynamics to those surrounding American jazz:

> Those guys are (or were) out there every night in small venues trading an ever-updated vernacular among themselves, every night in a different place with different musicians and groups. Forms developed through performing – on the stage. *Sanjo* was like that too – it may have been a life that we don't want to think about today – the situation for the *gisaeng* "courtesan," and the itinerant musicians...[2]

From the restaurant where we sat conversing in Seoul's Insa-dong district, he gestured around:

> This place was full of restaurants and studios and musicians. In the restaurants, after dinner, someone would start to sing, or play the drum, totally naturally. Or there would be hired entertainment. In any case, they were all here, night after night watching, listening to each other. *Sanjo* sprung out of this kind of fertile ground – a community of musicians talking to each other musically on the small stage, night after night.

Pak sees *sanjo* as inseparable from its performance conditions and arising out of an "atmosphere" of spontaneity and experimentation:

> If you want to know what killed *sanjo*, it is the big stage – the western-style concert hall-style stage. *Sanjo* cannot be about sitting at home and practicing by yourself what you memorized to get ready for a rarefied performance for 1,000 audience members who hear

it for the first time, amplified. That is not *sanjo*. The idea of music on the corner, in the street, in the tea house, in the restaurant – an atmosphere and meeting place for musicians is one of the things I tried to revive with the Sanjo Festival in Jeonju.

Pak had invited me to play in the 3rd Annual Jeonju *Sanjo* Festival in 2001, and participating in the night-time street performances remains one of my most vivid memories of that time. One cannot know what it was like "in the old days" but certainly a sense of something "authentic" was created in Jeonju – a step back and away from Seoul, the *zoom-zoom-zoom* globalizing city of 24 million where most Korean traditional musicians live and into the pedestrian past. Part of the extraordinary atmosphere of the festival came not only though the slowed down pace of sipping tea at a traditional house surrounded by a whole neighborhood of traditional houses, but through the local residents of Jeonju, and, in particular, through their connection to the traditional music. Collectively, the audiences of Jeonju are in a sense "holders" of Intangible Cultural Heritage. The only other place where I experienced this connection to the performance of Korean tradition was with the audiences in Namwon during the annual Chunhyang Festival. Comparatively, performing *sanjo* or *byeongchang* in Seoul is like performing in a mausoleum of distant memory. The Jeonju Sanjo Festival managed to spread its roots in fertile ground, creating an atmosphere not only conducive to cultural and musical exchange, but also an atmosphere in which traditional *sanjo* could thrive, at least for a few days a year.

Kim Jin-hi, the New York-based *geomun-go* performer, also picked up on this sense of place. A graduate of the Seoul National University Department of Traditional Music, Kim moved to the U.S. to study experimental music and composition with such 20th century greats as John Adams, Lou Harrison, Terry Riley, and David Rosenboom, eventually earning an MFA in electronic music/composition from Mills College in California. She had moved far beyond *sanjo* with projects for MIDI *janggu* and "geomunguitar," among others, and seemingly never looked back until Jeonju reawakened her love of *sanjo*.

In December of 2002, an MBC-TV crew from the City of Jeonju went to the United States to film a documentary on Kim's *geomun-go* work as part of a network documentary entitled "100 Years of *Sanjo*," which focused on the development of *sanjo* in the late 19th century in and around the city of Jeonju. According to Kim, "In the 20th century, as the *sanjo* form evolved, many soloists departed from the traditional form and created new styles of solo repertoire. It was within the context of my pioneering work evolving *sanjo* that I was asked to participate in the project."[3]

Subsequent to the broadcast of the film, Kim was invited to participate in the 5th Annual Jeonju *Sanjo* Festival, in 2003, where she presented her New *Sanjo* Project I: "*Sanjo* Ecstasy," which she performed with Ji Ae-ri (my teacher) on *gayageum*, *haegeum* virtuoso Gang Eun-il, Bak Geun-yeong on *janggu* (hourglass drum), and Gerry Hemingway on percussion kit. Kim Mae-mul, a shaman, danced. Kim writes,

> Jeonju reignited my creative desire to work with other creative musicians with *sanjo*. I took this precious opportunity to work on a new *sanjo* ensemble that retains the dynamic traditional aspects of the work in a contemporary context with several of Korea's leading musicians.[4]

<Figure 1> Kim Jin-hi performs the *geomun-go* (©Kim Jin-hi)

Kim's "*Sanjo* Ecstasy" grew out of the idea that *sanjo* developed through the improvisational ensemble form *sinawi* in association with a shamanistic *gut* ritual. In Kim's view,

> this improvising legacy is similar to early American jazz. As an essential part of the *gut*, the music was created for ecstasy that is experienced through tension and release

in performance energy. *Sanjo* has sophisticated melodies and a highly developed structure in the various rhythm cycles. In the *sanjo* form, the time sense is riveting, hypnotic, and almost trancelike in its manner of rhythmic repetition. The highly stylized rhythmic cycles gradually accelerate resulting in a mesmerizing experience.[5]

In "*Sanjo* Ecstasy" Kim sought to capture the "aesthetics and energy" of *sanjo*:

This suite has six pieces that are performed without break over a ninety-minute period of time. Each piece evokes its own energy and then links to the next. They are immersed with tension and release. In this new work, three traditional *sanjo* soloists move in and out of the traditional *sanjo* form as the electric [*geomun-go*] layers new sonic textures upon them. Korean [*janggu*] and a western drum set juxtapose the time sense between *sanjo* rhythmic cycles and a free jazz time zone.[6]

In the view of the jazz percussionist Pak Je-jun, who, together with his wife, pianist Mi-yeon, won Korean Music Awards in 2009 for "Best Crossover and Jazz" and "Best Performance," this is exactly the direction that *sanjo* in the 21st century should be taking. Pak is widely regarded as a pioneer in the movement known as *Gukak* and Jazz, combining western jazz with traditional Korean music. Born in 1961 in Seoul, Pak graduated from ChungAng University in 1986 with a degree in music composition. After graduation, he began studying Korean traditional forms, including the art of *pansori* (story singing), *janggu* (hourglass drum), and "the music of the Shamans" (*gut*).

As we were chatting on the phone one day, I asked him what he thought about *sanjo* – where he sees it going, and where he would like it to go. He said that while Pak Heung-ju's notion of creating a space out of which *sanjo* could naturally grow is all well and good, the old saying that "one can never step into the same river twice" is also true. "The past is over. Those times are gone but that does not mean that improvisation needs to die." Pak finds *sanjo* today to be missing the improvisational element, not just in relation to its rhythm patterns, but *within* rhythm patterns:

I'm not talking about the beat, but rather the speed within the tempo, the speed of an event. I mean ways in which one creates tension within the rhythm. Let's say I want to go see to you in Daejeon from my house in Seoul. I get on the highway in my car. Do I

> start out at 50 KPH and gradually increase my speed until I arrive – No! I really want to see you! That energy is there from the very beginning *dakadakadang*! Let's say I take the train instead of driving. It may be a better example because there is no way for me to increase the speed of the train myself. I want to see you and I'm sitting on the train. Now, I can make the time pass in different ways that will make it seem like I am getting to you faster. I can read a book, or drink coffee, or I can run up and down the aisle or in other ways increase the density of my activity. If I ride the train to see you every weekend, do I do the same thing at the same time on the train week after week? No! I do something different each time – read a different book, try out the massage chair, rent the karaoke room, drink a beer.[7]

I was reminded of master drummer Kim Myeong-hwan's (1913-1989) view that the rote imitation of a teacher's style, *sajin sori*, or "photographic sound," was worthless, and that anyone who used *sajin sori* was destined to "die like an ephemeral insect" (Um H.G. 2007: 12). Park finished his lament: "It is creativity that's missing from *sanjo* today!"

Traditional arts all over the world struggle with questions surrounding creative reinterpretation of iconic forms. In 2009, for example, a young Tlingit musician and carver from Sitka, Alaska, named Silver Jackson, submitted a piece titled "Raven and the First Immigrant" to a Vancouver, Canada, exhibition called "Continuum: Vision and Creativity on the Northwest Coast." Jackson's was a concept piece – a copy of a famous original by the same name that had been intricately and delicately hand-carved by Canadian Haida carver, Bill Reid – only here Silver outsourced "his" remake to a chainsaw carver. Jackson discusses his audacious re-rendering of such an iconic piece:

> The process of carving with a modern fuel-driven saw reflects today's common philosophy where efficiency or time is saved through instant gratification; production that is inseparable from the commodity market. Through this medium we lose subtlety and finesse, a process that refers to a cold and anonymous presence... Pacific Northwest Coast Art is plagued with conservatism – perhaps a reaction to our recent history? I look at how our culture is consumed, digested and interpreted by the mainstream, such as the bastardization of contemporary growth in a romanticized world, or tourism and its economic consequence. The consumption of Indigenous art by western society often abandons cultural concepts, while blindly focusing on aesthetic value. When you displace the soul and historical context of an object,

> you disclose a skeletal remain: *the tail end of a once sovereign society*. Though all cultures change dramatically through time, sovereign creativity is something we must not abandon as Indigenous artists. This is our lens [through] which we navigate the world [emphasis added].[8]

Seeing a photo of the rough and quick remake, Stephen Jackson, another young Alaska Native carver (now living in New York) and son of Tlingit master carver Nathan Jackson, challenged Silver:

> Does attempting to expose "the tail end of sovereignty," through the reappropriation of iconic artworks through a supposedly anti-aesthetic chainsaw vehicle, really invigorate a sovereign creativity by negative example? Does it make us want to conservatively keep the focus on the aesthetics?

Silver answered with an emphatic "Yes!"

Similar questions arise around modern *sanjo*. Does a three-minute electric guitar *sanjo*, for instance, as a kind of reappropriation of Koreanness in a globalizing post-colonial world, "invigorate" anything? The possibility that Canadian viewers do not recognize Jackson's piece as a rough and witty remake is just as poignant as the reality that most Korean college students have no basis on which to evaluate an electric guitar *sanjo*. The electric guitar player Kim Soo-chul's three clever *sanjo* for electric guitar and *janggu*, electric guitar and *gayageum*, and electric guitar and *daegeum*, each of which is exactly the length of a pop song, cannot be understood as a comment on the hour-long *sanjo* I have spent the last fifteen years learning. Nor can they be seen as a case of "efficiency or time saved through instant gratification" because the vast majority of the audience to which he speaks has no relationship whatsoever to that traditional *sanjo* form.

To use another example, let us take the case of *sanjo* for the piano, an instrument that cannot bend notes like a guitar. In contrast to a guitar, which in its electric form is generally equated with iconoclasm and youth culture, the piano stands for science, technology and industry, and high class standing in western music. But in the context of Korean traditional musical aesthetics, what is high class and what is low? What is rough (like chainsaw carving) and what is delicate (like hand carving)? The single note that changes its color with each iteration, or gymnastic virtuosity? Whom do we consider qualified to answer these kinds of questions if the passerby no longer has any contextual knowledge? Questions like

whether or not piano *sanjo* should be considered "authentic" *traditional* Korean art today deserve careful contemplation. The best place to begin might be to look at how we got into the business of rerendering *sanjo* in the first place.

When the first department of traditional, or "national music" *gugak*, was established at Seoul National University in 1959, it was constructed on the western educational model. *Gugak* thus came to be taught in essentially the same way as western classical music. But how and where would this "art" be exhibited now that it had become a subject for the class-conscious and scientifically minded?

In her *Imaginary Museum of Musical Works*, Lydia Goehr explains that in the process of "Romantic transcendence" that took place in western "art music" around 1800, "[f]raming, staging, and placement had to be reassessed, for they were all crucial signs by which an audience would be informed of an object's status, now, as a work of fine art" (Goehr 1992: 173). To find a place in the academy, *sanjo*'s "artness" similarly needed to be marked for extraction from its local, historical, and worldly origin – that is, estranged from its original external function and context – in order to be displayed next to western musical art objects. In this way, *sanjo* came to be thought of as "a work," with the founder of its "school" (*ryupa* – a Japanese term that until recently did not apply very well to the Korean situation) as the genius "composer."[9]

That *sanjo* had not yet taken on a discernable "material" form certainly presented a quandary. How could *sanjo* be treated and preserved in a form appropriate to a Korean temporal art of sound while also matching the romantic, aesthetic, and *scientific* beliefs embodied in the new western institution in which it was to be placed? By 1800 (not coincidentally, around the time the word *plagiarism* had first been applied to music, in 1797), "music" in the west was well on its way to taking the form of a collection of "musical works" wherein the "use of musical material [resulted] in complete and discrete, original and fixed, personally owned units" (Goehr 1992: 207). To be a true autonomous fine art "work," a "piece" now had to be written down – an act separate from its performance that dug a widening gulf between composer and performer. This is the situation in which *sanjo* found itself.

In *The Practice of Everyday Life*, Michel de Certeau (1984) writes about what he calls the "scriptural economy" of modern western culture, in which orality no longer plays the role of articulating culture, but rather as a means of transport "in other words, a practice: writing." Certeau writes of a point of departure where the "origin" or "myth" that comprises the "fragmented discourse that is articulated on the heterogeneous practices of a society" is

no longer found in what is narrated, but rather "in the multiform and murmuring activity of producing a text and producing society as a text." Progress, he points out, begins to be identified with the "scriptural":

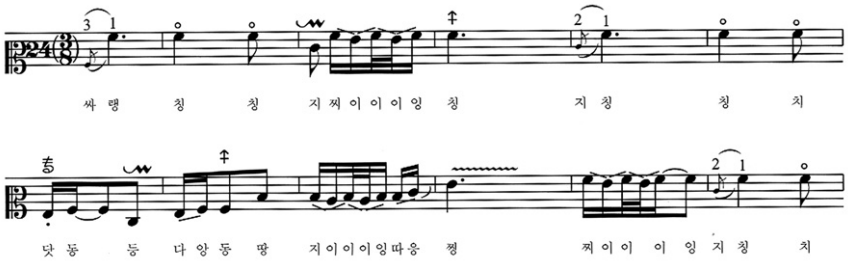
> In very diverse ways, orality is defined by (or as) that from which a "legitimate" practice... must differentiate itself. The "oral" is that which does not contribute to progress; reciprocally, the "scriptural" is that which separates itself from the magical world of voices and tradition. A frontier (and a front) of western culture is established by that separation. Thus one can read above the portals of modernity such inscriptions as "Here, to work is to write," or "Here only what is written is understood." Such is the internal law of that which has constituted itself western (Certeau 1984: 134).

The modern academy, mostly established by Christian missionaries, marks the line of that "front" in Korea. To bring Korean music into the academy to stand next to western music *for the Nation* is to write it down – that is, to transform it into Romantic Art.

In 1963 Lee Jae-suk, the first person in Korea to receive a B.A. and M.A. in Korean Traditional Music, to give a solo recital presenting court, folk, and modern music on a traditional instrument, to learn all of the eight most famous extant schools of *gayageum sanjo*, and to perform six different schools in a six-year concert series, began the task of transcribing *sanjo*. In 2008, her *Gayageum Sanjo*: *An Anthology of the Six Schools* was published in celebration of the 100th birthday of her teacher Lee Hye-gu, the man who set up the department at SNU and one of the most important figures in the history of Korean music studies. In 1967, Lee Jae-suk was hired by Seoul National University and remained there for over 30 years, influencing generations of *gayageum* players. She writes, "I have always felt the importance of transcribing existing traditional [*gayageum*] music in assisting transmission, as well as continuously creating new compositions for future generations... [and] the need for having a written notation, as a more objective tool for transmission [than learning by heart], especially when... teaching students at universities" (Lee J.S. 2008). Professor Lee's use of the language of science (i.e., "more objective tool") to describe her mission highlights the Zeitgeist of the era surrounding the institutionalization of Korean music within the university system.[10]

Among Lee's students were my first two teachers, Yi Ji-young, who has now succeeded Lee Jae-suk at SNU, and Ji Ae-ri. Both Yi and Ji were members of the National Classic Music Institute (now the National Centre for Korean Traditional Performing Arts) in the

division of court music on the second floor of the Institute. I learned the Seong Geum-ryeon School of *sanjo* from Ji Ae-ri, beginning in 1993 and using Lee Jae-suk's 1987 score. Though I also used Hwang Byeong-ju's score under Yi Ji-young in 1992, it is Lee Jae-suk's score that I now send to composers to introduce them to the *gayageum*. Next to the scores of Hwang Byeong-gi, Lee Jae-suk's transcription style is well thought out and easy to use. Together, these two writing styles set the standard for composers who are considering writing for the *gayageum*.



<Figure 2> A page from Lee Jae-suk's transcript
(©Lee Jae-suk)

On the first floor of the same Institute one can find the Division of Folk Music, where my other teacher works. From Kang Jeong-suk, the holder of Intangible Cultural Heritage No. 23 (along with An Suk-seon) for *Gayageum Byeongchang* and *Sanjo*, I studied *byeongchang* and observed others studying *sanjo* in the Seo Gong-cheol style. This style is not included in Lee Jae-suk's transcriptions, possibly because of its close association to *sinawi* and its complexity. (It is not a *school* that lends itself very easily to transcription, though it has now been transcribed within the school.) From the very beginning, my lessons with Ms. Kang differed fundamentally from those I received upstairs, from Yi Ji-young and later Ji Ae-ri. First of all, Ms. Kang told me just to come – no time, no date – just come. So I went several times until she was there. Then I was told to get a tape recorder, as there would be no score allowed (though one had been produced by Pak Gwi-hee (1921-1993), the first holder of Intangible Cultural Heritage No. 23). We worked for five minutes, and I was told that I could come back when I had learned that day's lesson.

In the beginning, I received private lessons at the Institute, but later, after the Institute put a stop to that practice, I joined Ms. Kang's regular students in her studio. She would be there all day two days a week. We could show up or not. If we did, we invariably spent the whole day there listening to the lessons of others until called, or until she assigned another student to teach us. Others also listened to us. There was no hiding. We went in, started the tape, took a lesson, and spent the rest of the days in between reviewing what was on the tape. In the summers, we would go up Mt. Jiri to a place called Yeongi Hermitage, above Hoam Temple in Jeolla Province, for a week or so and practice and take lessons all day every day.

At first, I could only take in a little at a time, but as time went on, my memory started to work in new ways as a result of this different way of learning, and I found I could take in bigger and bigger chunks. In contrast, for my lessons with Ji Ae-ri we always set a specific date and time. Ms. Kang had me work extensively with recordings, but Ji did not allow recording of lessons. I was to bring my score and make marks in it to remember what she was teaching me. Ms. Kang would not let me bring in any handwritten notes. She accurately titled the CD release of her Seo Gong-cheol *sanjo* "The Memory" (*gieok*).

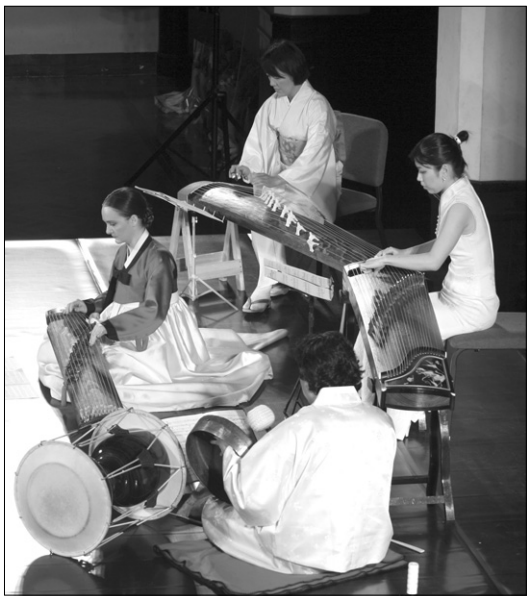
Hwang Byeong-gi comments that these days, as education becomes more formalized, "students get weekly lessons and learn the way western students learn music, using scores. You can say that in the old days a music student was in the middle of an ocean, whereas these days they are like a fish in a tank" (Na H.S. 2001: 201). This is true when we speak of Korean traditional music, but what about the larger picture? The whole society and audience has also changed. What has been gained and what lost? Another way to look at it might be that the Yellow Sea just got scooped up and dumped into the Pacific and suddenly all the fish had to look for new ways to swim, adjusting themselves to new currents.

The example of my experiences at the National Center for Korean Traditional Performing Arts (a.k.a. the aptly named National Classic Music Institute) underscores the idea that when we talk about *sanjo* today, we are not talking about a single thing. Aside from the various "schools," I am inclined to divide *sanjo* into two main streams – the one flowing out of the universities and on the second floor of the National Center for Korean Traditional Performing Arts, in the court division, and the one flowing on the first floor in the folk division. In other words, there is one stream that is classicized, or Romanticized – a stream that regardless of "school" contains a collection of memorized and transcribed works, and another that remains more or less a folk genre, which continues to live if not quite thrive. Both are called *sanjo*. When we look at how each of these streams flows into the 21st century, it seems that those players following the first classical stream turn more and more to

composers for solutions (seeking new works), while those following the second folk stream have turned to jazz (largely through international collaborations and cross-genre jams).

This is not to say that the two streams never meet. Many have climbed and descended the staircase that connects these two floors of the Institute. For instance, next to her work with composers, Yi Ji-young eventually studied the Seo Gong-cheol *sanjo* stream with Ms. Kang and has recorded it. Listening to the recording, next to that of Ms. Kang's however, one hears that the backgrounds of the two players are different, as are their futures – Kang's as a protector of folk tradition, the holder of an intangible heritage, while Yi works to internationalize the *gayageum* through exchange with composers from around the world.

My own road is closer to that of Yi's. In 2001, I met the Berlin-based composer and percussionist Chung Il-Ryun in Darmstadt, Germany, through a contact of Keith Howard's. Together we founded the ensemble IIIZ+, a dream of mine since the early 1990s when I first arrived in Korea. The ensemble was composed of Japanese *koto*, Chinese *zheng*, and Korean *gayageum* and percussion. In 1997, I launched a prototype of the ensemble for the opening of the new Asia Center at Harvard University with three of my teachers: Masayo Ishigure on *koto*, Wang Changyuan on *zheng*, and Ji Ae-ri on *gayageum* accompanied by Kim Woong-sik on percussion. For this occasion, I commissioned two new works for the ensemble – one from German composer Stefan Hakenberg, who was a composition student at Harvard at the time, and the other from Lei Liang, a Chinese composer and then student at New England Conservatory in Boston. I sent them materials from my repertoire on each of the instruments, including Lee Jae-suk's score for Seong Geum-ryeon's *gayageum sanjo*, and waited.



<Figure 3> Performance of ensemble IIIZ+ (©Jocelyn Clark)

As might be expected, given that most if not all the instruments were new to each of the composers, neither strayed far from the traditional materials. Each used his piece to find out about the instruments, but did so in interesting and different ways. Lei Liang created a kind of mobile aleatoric work called *Invisible Garden*, in which modules of traditional idioms taken from *sanjo* were to be chosen at random by players in reaction to the choices of the other musicians. Hakenberg created a montage called *Three Zithers and a Pair of Scissors*, which would become a signature piece of the subsequent ensemble IIIZ+.[11]

Though Hakenberg's piece uses only traditional *sanjo* material imported wholesale, I place *Three Zithers and a Pair of Scissors* in the category of *new sanjo* primarily because of the effect it has on the player when put together with the rest of the ensemble. Each of the parts of the montage is written in a different meter – whatever the meter happened to be for the traditional materials used. Thus, in the first movement, *Clang,* the *koto* part, taken from *Midare*, is in *hirajoshi* tuning in 4/4 time with a quarter note at 70, the *gayageum* part takes its Gs from the Cs of the *koto* [though Lee Jae-suk writes her scores in mezzo-soprano clef,

I have composers use treble clef, like a horn part in F] and is in 12/8 time (or *gutgeori* rhythm) with the dotted quarter at 70, and the *zheng* part in G, taken from the flowing water part of Wang Changyuan's version of *Gaoshan liushui* "Lofty Mountains Running Water", is in 2/4 time with a quarter note at 70. The *janggu* part is not written out. The composer explains, "because of the use of the *sanjo* as the source of the *gayageum* and *janggu* parts, I looked at the *gayageum* and *janggu* together as almost one thing. The sounds of the *gayageum* and the *janggu* are meant to be together as one entity, as if they were one instrument."[12] Thus Hakenberg left the *janggu* to accompany the *gayageum* as it normally would – in *gutgeori* meter – or at least that was the idea, but it took more than one rehearsal to get to "as it normally would."

Our current *zheng* player, Lai Yi-Chieh from Taiwan, who made *Three Zithers* the topic of her master's thesis at Taiwan National University for the Arts, asked Hakenberg how he came to choose the *sanjo* parts for *Clang*, which is intended to evoke the cymbal-playing of the flying bodhisattva seen painted on the walls of Buddhist temples, or in this case, as little statuettes in the Sachler Museum at Harvard. Each of the five movements in the piece is meant to depict a different bodhisattva: cymbals (*Clang*), konghu (a kind of lyre) (*Hum*), hourglass drum (*Pep*), flute (*Hold*), and *pipa* (a kind of lute) (*Concurrent*). Hakenberg explains:

> As far as I can remember, an aspect by which I chose sections of the *gayageum sanjo* for *Clang* was the relative density of the material; the denser, the more interesting to me in the context of this piece. The sections from the *gayageum sanjo* chosen for *Clang* are particularly dense, loud, and reverberating in relation to the rest of the *sanjo*. I was [also] looking for sections with a relatively stable sound that would also feature lots of embellishment and vibrato in order to reflect the vibrations on the surface of the ringing cymbal... When you think of the three zithers, *koto*, *gayageum*, and *zheng*, and you wish to use them to portray cymbals, you might think that using the *gayageum* will just not work. But that is where it becomes interesting to me. I want to listen closer and closer and to find something that can work despite the first, perhaps still superficial considerations. I know that by doing so I am creating potential for surprise and deeper truth in what I may find.[13]

Aside from the composer's own thoughts on using the *geutgeori* rhythm pattern of *sanjo* to portray cymbals, however, what we find as players is that putting traditional

materials, or here, specifically *sanjo*, into a western harmonic structure next to two opposing meters changes our relationship to the "original," Lee Jae-suk's score or what I learned from Ji Ae-ri and from Seong Geum-ryeon's recordings.

To keep the piece from falling apart, at least in the beginning, the *janggu* needed to keep its rhythms very straight to keep the ensemble together, and each of us needed to change our way of counting, dynamics, and accenting to realize the new piece. We needed to breathe differently. "One" should sound like a single shot, not a machine gun, though in this context invariably the *zheng* was quick off the blocks, the *koto* right on time, and the *gayageum* took a little breath first. Thus, though all the materials were entirely traditional, from specific sources (in this case, all from my repertoire), they suddenly became new, perhaps in the same way squares of color look different when placed on different colored backgrounds – except in this case, we actually had to change the colors a little to fit the new framework.

Hakenberg explains how the *gayageum* part works in the fourth movement, *Hold*, which is taken from the *jinyangjo* rhythmic pattern of *sanjo*. The *gayaguem* part is in 3/8, the *koto* in 4/4, and the *zheng* in 2/4.

> If you look at the *gayaguem* part, you can see a sequence of pitches like B♭, B♭, ..., B♭, B♭, A, B♭, B♭, A, A, G, B♭, A, G, G... One way of articulating a long note is by giving it a dynamic shape like *piano*, *crescendo* to *forte*, and *decrescendo* to *piano*. Another way to give life to a long note is to change its pitch slightly, like in a pitch vibrato. The pitch sequence in the *gayageum* part can be interpreted as a representation of such a modulation of the pitch of a sustained note. In fact many of the notes of the *gayageum* in this piece are themselves modulated by all sorts of embellishments. The slightly changing pitches in the *gayageum* part also make for the interesting dissonances that appear in *Hold* and are not so easy to play with good intonation because now, in *Hold*, you have minor seconds between your parts at times and an ambivalent tonality... The different parts are arranged together so that they form chromatic material around a clash of E-minor and C-minor, a scale of C-D-E-E♭-F-F♯-G-A-B... [For instance,] the *gayageum* part, G and B♭, which sounds like concert C and concert E♭ (m. 13), comes together with the F♯ and E in m. 9 of the second beat of the *zheng* part. The *zheng* is holding on that F♯ and going on to E, then F♯, E, and so on, together with the C and E of *gayageum* part at the same time. It is much denser harmonically [than the other movements] – with many more different pitches, many more different intervals – some of them quite dissonant. That creates a very different

character for this piece, *Hold*, not only in terms of what you are playing individually from your original material, but in all kinds of different ways, also harmonically.[14]

One cannot play the *gyemyeonjo* mode in the traditional way here, but rather must play in harmony with the other instruments – a chord. Normally, in *sanjo*, we would not play the passing E so low. As one plays Hakenberg's work over and over again, little ear worms start to creep into the brain, where they lie in wait to take effect when returning to the traditional *sanjo*. One's relationship to tradition starts to change.

When we talk about new *sanjo*, one's relationship to tradition truly lies at the heart of the matter. IIIZ+ has gone on to commission six more works. In each case in the above examples, I included Lee Jae-suk's score and Ji Ae-ri's very clear recording of Seong Geum-ryeon's *gayageum sanjo*, in addition to other materials I sent to the composers. Thus each piece has some relation to *sanjo* – not only because of the materials, but also because it provides the basic material embodied by the *gayageum* player. For instance Chung Il-ryun's *gayageum* concerto (if I might) *Bendings*, takes off from where Hakenberg's *Three Zithers* ends.

Chung's music is interesting to explore in relationship to *sanjo* and Korean tradition. Chung was born in Germany in 1964 when his father was studying there as a physicist. However, his father was connected to the 1967 "East Berlin Incident" in which the South Korean government under Chung Doo Hwan alleged that by visiting the North Korean Embassy in East Berlin, artists, intellectuals and students in Europe with differing political views were involved in spying for the North. Both of Chung's parents along with sixty-six others, including the composer Yun Isang, were kidnapped by the KCIA, tortured, and imprisoned. Chung spent his early childhood in Korea with his aunt and with both parents on death row. Chancellor Willy Brandt eventually managed their release and Chung spent the rest of his formative years back in Germany where he studied guitar and eventually composition. Not surprisingly his relationship to Korean tradition is as conflicted as it is close. When Kim Duk-soo started giving *Samulnori* workshops in Berlin, Chung joined the workshops and studied *janggu*. When I met him in 2001, he had not accompanied before but was quite a good *janggu* player. We grew together as "Korean traditional" musicians in the *sanjo*, which I had not played much with accompaniment up until that point.

After our first rehearsal for the first concert of IIIZ+ in Darmstadt, Chung gave me a recording of his solo and chamber works called "Movement in Circles." The first piece, *Violinsonate*, is basically a violin *sanjo*. I listened to it over and over again – particularly to the second movement in which he has the player pluck the violin strings in triple meter like a

gayageum. But perhaps Chung's most direct influence from *sanjo* comes from his new work *Mu* or "Dance," commissioned by Yi Ji-young, which will be premiered in June of 2009, in Seoul.

Chung, who calls *gayageum* one of his "favorite instruments," recalls how it came to earn such a prominent role in his work:

> A small part of a *gayageum sanjo* on a tape, which I heard over and over again 25 years ago, was the first Korean music I loved. Since that time, *gayageum* has been a constant source of inspiration for me – idiomatic *gayageum* sounds and techniques are present in many of my works, especially in my guitar music or my solo pieces for violin and cello ... For several years I have been able to gain experience in accompanying *gayageum sanjo* – I learned how complicated the plucking technique of the *gayageum* is and thus so capable of producing wonderful sounds. The left hand modulates the sound in uncountable numbers of ways. It took me a long time to understand that the *gayageum* is a melody instrument and not a harmony instrument – opposite to the other Asian zithers, *koto* and *zheng*.[15]

Chung had been considering writing a piece for *gayageum* and *janggu* when he was offered a commission from Yi Ji-young:

> I wanted to write a piece for *gayageum* that was close to the *sanjo* tradition. If one ignores this tradition, the *gayageum* just does not sound like the *gayageum* I like so much. I didn't even touch the tuning. It was a challenge for me to see if I could find a music in the traditional tuning that would sound nevertheless new.

Hwang Byeong-gi also commented on this problem. He had avoided writing a piece based on *sanjo* for a long time. "*Sanjo* has such a strong character that if you want to write something based on it, it just becomes *sanjo*,"[16] he explained.[17] Chung's solution to the problem was to take away the traditional rhythmic modes:

> I made my own rhythm cycles with speed metamorphosis and *gayageum* patterns, which are sometimes in harmony and sometimes competing with the rhythms. The *janggu* (also a favorite instrument for me) plays an important role, that of the *gosu* [drum accompanist] in *sanjo*. Without *janggu*, this piece would not be possible.[18]

Timing is also one of the ways pianist and composer Yuji Takahshi, who wrote *Twining Voices* for IIIZ+ in 2007, both breaks with and recaptures tradition. For him, *sanjo* becomes a lens through which to look to the past. He lowered the *gayageum*'s traditional *sanjo* tuning by a fifth as if to slow things down, making the bridges far away, and wrote a piece without time and without bar lines to be played tentatively, he says, "like a moth playing with fire." Takahashi writes:

> East Asian traditional instruments have been modernized in different ways and degrees toward speed, tension, equalization, and loudness. Modernization is through westernization in many cases. As a result, music accelerates toward virtuosity and roughness [as in the above Alaska Native chainsaw carving example]. In this piece, musicians are asked to loosen the tight control of their instruments and music. Through listening to the sounds of their own instruments and the surrounding air, the minute changes of tone quality affect timing and vice versa. On each zither, the historical sense for different intervals forms a portion of the timbre. The entwining three zither voices are interrupted by the forceful end-rhyme of the *janggu*. Percussion without traditional *jangdan* patterns responds to or breaks the flow.[19]

In a way, each section can be thought of as ending with a *gak*, a word that indicates the feeling the *janggu* player gives the ending of a phrase, the punctuation so important in *sanjo*. As in traditional Korean music, the *janggu* player is given the freedom to do it in his own way in *Twining Voices*. Moreover, each section alternates, long and short, *jang*, *dan*, loud and soft, with tension and release. In this way, it might be thought of as a kind of *sanjo*; just not a Korean traditional *sanjo*.

Other composers who have written for me or for IIIZ+ are much farther away from Korea in all ways. Nürnberg-based composer Volker Blumenthlaer, who wrote three pieces for me, commented on the third, *riscalda*, *ricresce*, *rigonfia* (2002) or "To get warm, to arise, and to extend," for *gayageum*, cello, and *erhu* (Chinese 2-stringed fiddle): "Suspended sounds grope their way in a silent room and weave a subtle web of relations. It's an imagination of a creative situation with unusual instruments – a respectful look into the room of the others."[20] And that is what many compositions for *gayageum* by western composers are – an imaginary conjuring of *sanjo*, a respectful peek into the room of another from the vantage point of one's own chamber.

Japanese-American composer Ken Ueno composed a solo *gayageum* piece for me in

2005 called...*where Ginkgo Grow in Borromean Knots*.... Ueno more or less kept the traditional *sanjo* tuning intact, with the exception of a few strings that are tuned microtonally. Writes Veno;

> When writing my piece for *gayageum*, I studied the scores and recordings of *sanjo* that Jocelyn Clark had sent me. She also demonstrated and lectured to me in person. Since my aim in writing the piece was to try to do something that was not only idiomatic to the instrument physically, but also idiomatic to the performance practice history of the instrument, I drew much inspiration from Korean *sanjo*. What I felt I could draw from and try to adapt in my own way were the rhythmic cycles and nuclear melodies. In a way, it was like discovering a whole new rubric to strategize constraint systems for a compositional process.[21]

Instead of approaching the composition by either entirely conforming to the stylizations of *sanjo*, or adapting the instrumental forces to speak in the grammar of the contemporary music of the west, Ueno sought to create a middle ground by imagining a fictitious folk tradition – the *sanjo*, if you will, of N'shima. Ueno explains:

> On the [imaginary] island of N'shima, people play instruments imported from Korea. The people of N'shima are tree weavers (in fact, the whole island is a boat whose hull is the complex woven roots of the Gingko trees – the fruits of which are the only export of the island). The natives, living on such an island (the island constantly floats between oceans and time) have developed a great sense of memory, but have no sense of beginning or end (or east or west) or chronology. In their cosmology, the real, the symbolic, and the imaginary are inextricably linked. The structure of their music is also related to their unusual geographic condition: the music consists of nuclear gestures, which constantly weave between and against each other, creating patterns which seem to repeat at different intervals; and, as in complex knots (or weaving patterns), it is difficult to clarify which link is linked to which link, but they are all dependent upon each other.[22]

In 2001, American composer Jeff Nichols wrote me a *gayageum* solo piece called *The Beams That Through the Oriel Shine,* to premiere at the Korean National University of Arts. While without drum accompaniment or traditional modes, Nichols' piece is also a kind of

sanjo – at least I immediately felt it that way and approached it that way. Nichols explains that he was impressed by *sanjo* in two ways: first, "the sense of large-scale pacing, the very gradual accumulation of energy over long spans of time. I tried in some way to replicate that in my work"; second,

> the way the inflections of intonation transformed one's sense of the timbre of the instrument. The basic pentatonic framework of the instrument's tuning is always present, but often is displaced by nuanced and intricate shadings that for me had the effect of moving from an exterior to an interior space. This had something to do, I imagine, with resonance: the closer one gets to the open tunings of the strings, the more resonant the timbre and the greater the sense of space; the more the strings are stretched, the less resonant, the more detailed the shadings of pitch, and so a feeling of intimacy emerges. In my own piece I used a more complex tuning of ten separate pitches, but duplicated the first two pitches in the top two strings to try to retain some of the resonance characteristics of the instrument despite the more chromatic basis of my pitch language. If I were to write again though I'd probably try retaining the standard *sanjo* tuning just to see what I could make of it.[23]

East Coast Chinese-American Jazz composer and saxophonist Fred Ho, who wrote *Suite for Matriarchal Shaman Warriors* for IIIZ+ in 2005, was also affected by *sanjo*. "The aesthetic concept for this suite is post-primitivist ancient avant-garde possessional and processional music," writes Ho in his program notes. "All instrumentalists can freely interpret with ornamentation, stylistic embellishments and adlib to enhance the intent and feel/meaning of the work. Traditional Asian 'feels' and 'stylisms' are welcome as well as more experimental techniques and out-isms." Ho describes his use of "*sanjo*" in one of the movements in the suite, "*Sanjo* for a Soulful Socialism," as simply meaning a "short, soulful, improvised solo form." In "*Sanjo* for a Soulful Socialism," "While not explicitly *sanjo*, I wanted to evoke those qualities. Often when I play 'jazz'-influenced short improvisations, I conjure them as *sanjo* – the free-like quality, the heart-felt poignant individuality."[24] For Ho, it is all part of his project to create an "Afro Asian New American multicultural music that weaves together the most soulful and transgressive forms of African American music and the musical influences of Asia and the Pacific Rim."[25]

Similarly, west coast Chinese-American composer Byron Au Yong, in writing his *haegeum sanjo*, "Salt Lips Touching," struggled with how to write a work for *haegeum* that

reflects the nuances of Korean music, while incorporating his experiences as a Chinese-American composer raised within a western classical and modernist musical lineage. "I found the connection in the heightened loneliness that characterizes both *sanjo* and composing,"[26] he said.

> When I listened to *sinawi* and the Korean musical forms that *sinawi* inspired such as *sanjo*, I heard sounds that pierced through the firmament or through a lover's heart. *Sanjo* inhabited a sphere of incredible yearning that was simultaneously distant yet intimate. My upbringing as a composer removed me from playing music with others into an isolated mental space where pencil and paper were my only physical companions. I grew up as an only child in the United States with immigrant parents who divorced when I was eight years old. As a child, I walked by myself up three hills to get to school. I created songs as I walked knowing that when I returned home I could comfort myself by playing the piano.

Professor Kim's [Yong-Jae, the *haegeum* player who performed Au Young's piece] parents passed away when he was a young man, and similarly, in his solitude he played the *haegeum*, infusing his musical inflections with the pain of isolation and understanding. Playing *sanjo* and composing music depend on loneliness:

> Dr. Maria Seo further inspired me to write this *haegeum sanjo* by mentioning that the venue would be in Jeonju, the birthplace of this form. Re-imagining the origins of *sanjo*, the percussion instruments I specify to accompany the *haegeum* are *ggwaenggwari* and *jing*, rather than *janggu*. Imagining early *sanjo* performances, I hear gongs play the *jangdan* rhythmic cycles instead of a drum. The tones of the *haegeum* merge with the resonance of the gongs to layer increasingly complex overtones. In the shimmering of these eternal echoes, melodies refract like sunlight on the rhythmic waves of the all-knowing, all-accepting sea. In "Salt Lips Touching," the *haegeum* sings across this ocean of place and time to embrace the longing, cruelty, and complexity of being human.[27]

The extent to which these solo works can or cannot be thought of as new *sanjo* probably also depends on the player. Because *sanjo* is fundamental to a Korean instrumentalist's training, there will always be a flavor of *sanjo* in pieces such as those

described above, as opposed, for instance, to what might result from a western harp or cello player picking up the same scores. The *sanjo* player's approach to even a non-*sanjo* score is heavily influenced by *sanjo* – the degree to which what we see in a transcription relates to what we learn by ear. The score is something looser than it is to a western musician – more mnemonic than absolute. Of course we musicians need to change our approach to make it in the world of new music in the west, particularly in the context of an ensemble chamber work, but we are used to adding our own *sigimsae* (specific ornaments and expressions) to what we see on the page. When a western musician does take a score loosely memorizes something entirely different emerges. I remember listening to the fantastic cellist Wolfgang Lessing rehearse a solo work written by Chung Il-ryun in Dresden, Germany. Chung's piece was more or less written with *sanjo* in mind without being directly *sanjo*. Lessing had never heard *sanjo*. He had memorized the 30-minute piece and filled it with his own breath, which curiously took him and Chung's piece in an entirely different direction than *sanjo*. Where a gradual increase in tempo seemed to be intended, Lessing got slower and slower – beautifully so, but with an entirely different understanding, experience, and history of music in his body and mind.

While the *sanjo* is probably never far from the mind of a composer writing for Korean traditional instruments, if we look through the output of Korean composers writing for western instruments, we also find *sanjo* in titles. What is their relationship to "Korean tradition? And, perhaps just as importantly, what is the relationship of the performer, of piano for instance, to Korean tradition?"

By 2005, some 40% of students at Julliard were of Korean ancestry – a microcosm of music schools all over the west. If we talk about Korean music, we must by now include western instruments and traditions. In Korea, even the word *eumak* "music" now is one that indicates western music rather than traditional genres such as *sanjo*. Hwang Byeong-gi explains how this has come about:

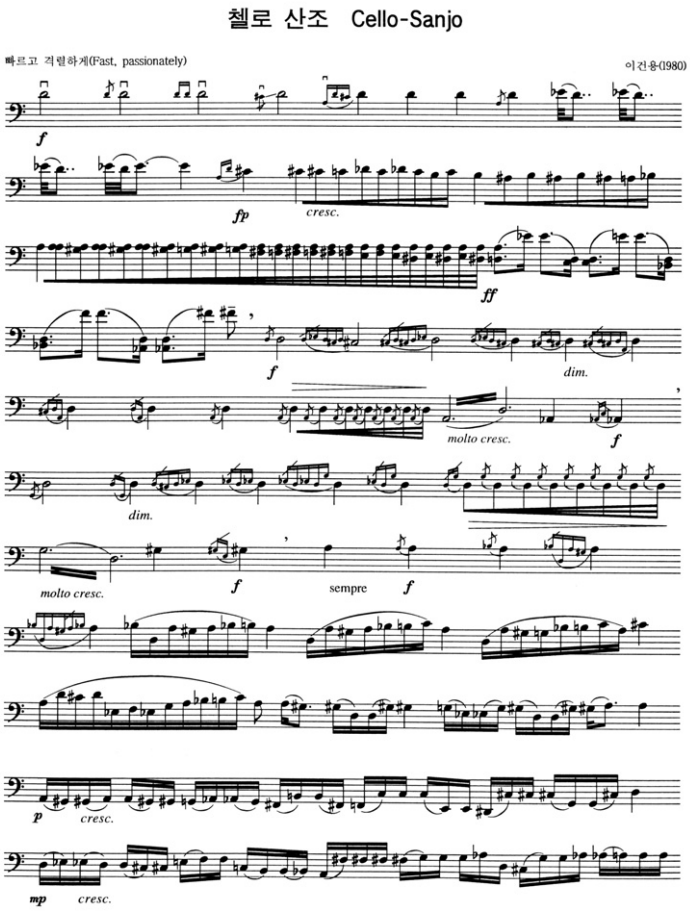
> At schools, they only taught European music, not Korean traditional music at all. That's how the leading intellectuals of the country only got to know western music and ended up being completely ignorant about Korean music. Furthermore, they were saying that music is a universal language and there are no boundaries between different types of music. So western music became the music for everybody – the universal language. Koreans began to have a complex about their own traditional music and ignored the fact that it had existed (Na H.S. 2001:205).

The Korean avant-garde movement began in the 1970s led by young composers who studied abroad – primarily in Germany, where Yun Isang achieved international reputation, and, to a lesser extent, in the U.S. A few western composers who were initially part of the avant-garde movement found a new way – a Korean way – to be avant-garde, through *sanjo* among other things.

I want to mention Lee Geon-yong here again in relation to the second explicit *sanjo* he wrote fourteen years after his first, *Phrygian Sanjo*, which I wrote about earlier in this chapter. Lee was one of the Korean composers who went to Germany. In 1976, he traveled to Frankfurt am Main, where he studied composition with Heinz Werner Zimmermann at the Frankfurter Musik-hochschule. After returning, he challenged the modernism that dominated the Korean musical environment in the early 1980s, founding a composers' group called "The Third Generation," devoted to creating music that represents the unique identity of Korea. Whereas in *Phrygian Sanjo*, from 1980, he did not intend anything other than "an instrumental work" by "*sanjo*," in *Cello Sanjo*, from 1994, Lee opens up his piece to the player. In his opening remarks, published in the score, he writes, "This piece is a *Sanjo*. That is, the player is not expected to cling to the details of the notes. Instead, he should rely on the main stream of the piece and his own intuition. For this purpose, a player should rather memorize the whole piece and play [rather than *present*] a note by note observation." He continues:

> The tempo of this piece is quite flexible, and not steady. The piece is sometimes loosened, and sometimes fastened or pulled. Also the durations of each note are not steady either. Especially with long notes, a player may select his own way of playing as long as it is not out of bounds. However, the durations of short notes (16ths) are desirable to be more or less [realized] in a regular outline (Lee G.Y. 1994).

While a look into the score reveals that Lee's *Cello Sanjo* goes "backwards" in terms of a linear development of time – from fast, passionate, and dense, to slow, calm, and loose, "with enough expression" – here we can see that Lee's relationship to *sanjo* also changes over time, as he familiarizes himself with traditional music, relinquishes control, and slows down, becoming to a degree a co-creator with his player, a player of a western instrument. The process represents a kind of *untying*.



<figure 4> Lee Geon-yong's *Cello Sanjo* (©Lee Geon-yong)

A slightly junior colleague of Professor Lee's, Yoo Byeong-eun, has made it his life's work to write *sanjo* for western instruments. With Professor Lee's introduction, Professor Yoo agreed to meet with me with about 15 minutes' notice, while his regularly scheduled student waited in the hall. Currently Professor at the Korean National University of Arts, Yoo was born in 1952, during the Korean War. Like Lee, Yoo received only western music education in his formative years. After receiving a Bachelor of Music degree at Seoul National University, he made his way to America, where he continued his studies with

Professor Leslie Bassett at the University of Michigan, from which he received his Master's degree in 1982. It was during his time in the U.S. that he began to question what he was doing. "Do I really like the music of Stockhausen and Boulez? Do we [Koreans] have any historical or socio-cultural background for 12-tone avant-garde music?" he asked. "I came to the conclusion that I should compose my own music that sounded more explicitly Korean, more directly rooted in *our own* tradition, more pleasing and enjoyable to general audiences, that could also keep up with modernity or even transcend it." He started to study Korean traditional music and soon found that, "unfortunately, [it] was not something to be learned effortlessly and spontaneously like my mother tongue" (Yoo B.E. 2002: 272).

As I was interviewing Professor Yoo, I kept thinking that if this composer loves *sanjo* so much, why not just write for traditional instruments, which are actually designed to play *sanjo*. They can do the *nonghyeon* and *yoseong* vibrato and use the natural tuning. Seeming to read my mind, he repeated what he had written in his piece "An Interaction and a Reaction," for *Dongyang Eumak* [Asian Music]: "Few western composers are interested in writing for non-western instruments. And even if they are, they have little physical access to them. I want to put western instruments into our tradition."

Why not? Who's to say that western instruments are not Korean by now? Since the 1970s, the piano has become just as Korean as any other instrument. Yoo continues, "Are *nonghyeon* and temperament really the only characteristics that guarantee the identity of Korean music? I don't think so. Then what else is important to distinguish Korean music from that of others? The syntax!" (Yoo B.E. 2002: 275).

Yoo recalled brooding over the idea of piano *sanjo*:

> The syntax of Korean traditional music, which lacks the western sense of harmony, consists of two basic elements. One is melodic and the other is rhythmic. Melodic syntax determines the probability of occurrence of a certain tone following a specific tone in a mode. Rhythmic syntax determines the probability of occurrence of a certain duration following a specific duration... Tonality is inevitable for the establishment of melodic or harmonic syntax in music and regularity is necessary for the rhythmic syntax... The problem is how we can achieve a high aesthetic standard with tonality [as opposed to atonality, which Yoo says is a matter of removing all syntax and thus alienating audiences] when all kinds of tonal experiments already have been made in the west since the turn of the 20th century (Yoo B.E. 2002: 276).

He began working out these problems in his first *Piano Sanjo*, and continued in 1994 with *Piano Sanjo* No. 2. The piece – in five movements without pause – is modeled directly on traditional *sanjo* in its formal structure. The role of the *janggu* drum accompaniment is assigned to the left hand and the melodic structure, including cadential gestures, melodic and rhythmic, are based on traditional modes. *Nonghyeon* vibrato is approximated with grace notes and crashing seconds. As Yoo explains, "There is no theory or system of harmony... the music sounds tonal, but there is no tonal center for the full piece" (Yoo B.E. 2002: 277). While there are moments in which there seems to be a tonal center, it constantly shifts, and rather quickly. The piece does not develop on a theme. Unlike the traditional *sanjo*, though, Yoo's transitions are mostly smooth, not so direct and abrupt.

In his discussion of his thoughts on *sanjo* for western instruments, he then surprised me by saying that he tried to avoid *gyemyeonjo* – the mode of sorrow prominent in the music of the south where *sanjo* originated. "The emotion it gives rise to is somewhat maudlin and negative to modern Koreans. On the whole I tried to express brighter and more positive feelings in the piece, compared to traditional *sanjo*" (Yoo B.E. 2002: 277). I was reminded of, among other things, a score I came across in the Harvard-Yenching Library some years ago. It was a *koto* score from the late 19th century, a period of rampant social Darwinism following the Meiji Restoration of 1868 – a time when Japan was being confronted with the west for the first time in more than 200 years. One of the most well-known *koto* pieces (and the piece Hakenberg used in his montage next to *sanjo*), "*Midare*," by Yatsuhashi Kengyo (1614-1685), which can be translated as "chaos." The character is *ran* (or *mida[re]*). But on the library score, the character had been changed to *mi* (or *utsuku[shii]*) – *mi*-dare, the character for "beauty" – in order to avoid any negative or "maudlin," if you will, feelings. In his next sentence, Yoo goes on to remind us that, "Europe or America is not the only world on earth nowadays."

Contemplating the way in which he put these three sentiments together – the urge to spend his compositional life exploring *sanjo* for western instruments, the urge to avoid the main melodic mode in *sanjo*, *gyemyeonjo*, because of the negativity of sorrow, and the nationalist undertones – I decided the time had come to listen to his CD. Yoo succeeds. His 25-minute piano *sanjo* is fresh both as a *sanjo* as well as in the context of western art music. It is a *sanjo* in the idiom of (slightly jazzy) new music. Yoo, we can rest assured, will not "die like an ephemeral insect."

Yoo finishes his thoughts by quoting the following quote on "Nationalism" from the *Harvard Dictionary of Music*: "By about 1930 the nationalist movement had lost its impact

nearly everywhere in the world. The pendulum swung back to supranational idioms, so much so that nationalism was called *the last illusion of people without talent*." "I wonder what they exactly [have] in mind when they say the 'world'?" he asked. In his article in *Dongyang Eumak*, Yoo writes:

> Combining the non-European mind of creativity with European instruments or vice versa, I think there are still many possibilities of expression in music. I still believe that non-western music can contribute to open a new vista for the world's music today and in the future. Like all other forms or styles in the arts, *sanjo* has its own strength and potentialities, as well as weakness and limitations. We cannot use the same forms, modes, and rhythms on and on all the time. By doing that, we may preserve the tradition but we cannot create a new one. *Sanjo* has to be transformed into a new creative form and style. At the moment, I wish my work to serve as a bridge between the tradition and the better tradition in the future for this country (Yoo B.E. 2002: 278).

I have left much out in this chapter – from the traditional world, from the jazz world, and from the world of new music. My chapter is like *sanjo* – scattered thoughts and sources pulled together on a theme, and improvised on occasion. Pak Heung-ju thought that his *sanjo* festival, before it got shut down after six years, in reaction to his perhaps over-inclusive and iconoclastic approach to *sanjo* vis-á-vis his audience of intangible treasure protectors, could eventually be extended to dance, to food, to architecture... that there was a little bit of *sanjo* in everything Korean. If *sanjo* in the 21st century cannot be confined to music, it is also becoming harder and harder to continue binding music to prescribed ethnic groups and geographic boundaries, regional and national. In today's global arena, in which all forms penetrate new territory, *sanjo* continues its outward journey, expanding in concentric circles from Jeolla province, to Korea, to the world. In this process, *sanjo* indisputably has been, is, and is destined to continue to be, transformed and reimagined, as it finds itself transplanted in new soils with different topologies, changed growing seasons, and new tenders. This does not mean that the original dies out, but rather becomes one voice in a cacophony that requires one to know how to listen for it in order to hear it. It is like the *sanjo* in the montage *Three Zithers and a Pair of Scissors*: In performance (and I dare say in rehearsal), only the Koreans in the audience hear the Korean *sanjo* as the main voice or at all; the Japanese hear *Midare* and the Chinese hear five folk tunes; Americans experience a culture show; Europeans hear new music, which is also how they might hear Yoo's *Piano Sanjo*.

The creation and reception of new *sanjo* in today's world depend on localized and embodied meaning made up of references that are concurrently expanding and being extinguished, not unlike the glaciers surrounding my hometown in Alaska that melt and change form as they continue flowing out of the mountains and into the ocean.

Composer Yun Isang once said that he found the whole question as to whether he composed eastern or western music uninteresting, as he was writing the music he *had* to write because he was himself. As *sanjo* moves through the hands of inspired artists who "are themselves" it cannot but be transformed, but not necessarily at the expense of *original sanjo*, which remains the source and heart of our inspiration.

The author would like to thank the literary equivalent of her *gosu*, "master hand", her editor, Liz Dodd, for her contributions to this short *sanjo*.

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[1] Lee Geon-yong, personal correspondence, May, 2009.

[2] These quotes are loose ones from my notes and internal translation of our conversation in Insadong, Seoul on May 6th, 2009.

[3] Kim Jin Hi, The 5th Jeonju Sanjo Festival (2003) Program Notes.

[4] Op. Cit.

[5] Op. Cit.

[6] Op. Cit

[7] This translation is very loose.

[8] Face Book conversation, May 18th, 2009.

[9] It is worth noting here that although the Intangible Heritage for *sanjo*, no. 23 "*gayageum sanjo* and *byeongchang*," includes *byeongchang, byeongchang* is excluded from the academy. Before the Romantic era in music, "the use of words [in music] was considered essential to any musical occasion if that occasion was to be regarded as edifying, truthful, and thereby respectable. Instrumental music ended up being rejected on the grounds that, by itself, it had no or at least insufficient, moral import and, therefore, was probably of very little import at all" (Goehr 1992:128). However, in the 1800s, instrumental music found nobility within theorizing on the fine arts – with the idea of art for art's sake- *l'art pour l'art*- art in service to nothing but itself. By restricting university study to "instrumental music" *sanjo*, the *gayageum* and its players were lifted along with *sanjo* into the middle class, on a par (theoretically) with violinists and pianists.

[10] For a very good discussion of that *Zeitgeist*, specifically in relationship to the establishment of the Department of Traditional Music at Seoul National University and the issues of class at stake, see Kim Hee-sun, 2008.

[11] This piece may be heard at http://threezeeplus.com/listen/frameslisten.html.

[12] Hakenberg interview, Cambridge, MA, Oct. 2006.

[13] Op. Cit.

[14] Op. Cit.

[15] Chung, Il-Ryun, personal correspondence, May 2009.

[16] Na, p. 173.

[17] Hwang did eventually write a new *sanjo* – "Southern Fantasy" – titled thus because "*sanjo* is like a fantasy and *sanjo* is the music of the south. That's how I decided the title." Hwang Byeong-gi in Na, p. 175.

[18] Chung Il-ryun, personal correspondence, May 2009.

[19] Takahashi, Yuji, Program notes, 2007.

[20] Blumenthaler, Volker, Program notes, 2002. http://www.volker-blumenthaler.de/link Dateien/comments.html#riscalda

[21] Ueno, Ken, Personal correspondence, May 2009.

[22] Ueno, Ken, Program notes, 2005.

[23] Nichols, Jeff, Personal correspondence, May 2009.

[24] Ho, Fred, personal correspondence, May, 2009.

[25] Ho, Fred, http://www.bigredmediainc.com

[26] Au Young, Byron, Program notes, 4th Jeonju Sanjo Festival, 2002.

[27] Op. Cit.

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