

East–West Encounters in the *Nanjang*: The Sound World of SamulNori and Red Sun Group

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To attend a *nanjang* in its heyday was to experience rural Korean society at its liveliest and most boisterous. Over the course of a few days villagers gathered to eat, drink, purchase native and foreign wares, gamble, play folk games, have their fortunes told, attend wrestling matches, and be further entertained by performances of largely itinerant groups of musicians, dancers, and actors, all officially sanctioned by local authorities within an agreed-upon boundary and duration. The local and imported, the legal and unlawful (under ordinary circumstances), the violent and sometimes sublime, and even the sacred and profane, all coexisted somewhat artificially but in general harmony in this festival atmosphere (Chong Un'gil 1998:260; see also Yi Sangil 1987:138–40 and O Changhyon *et al* 2000:174–78). For the traveling performers who often accompanied such events, the *nanjang* offered valuable opportunities for artistic development, a space both in time and place to stretch and exercise creative inclinations. For those in attendance, it provided not only amusements but a window – admittedly opaque – onto cultural forms and practices beyond their immediate borders, the byproduct of centuries of trading, interacting, and even intermarrying between wandering artists and merchants of Korea and those of China, Mongolia, and beyond (Shim Usong 1968:699–701; Kim Yang-kon 1967:5–7).

Today such forms of entertainment have moved to a broader, global scale, as now predominantly urban South Koreans choose from a wide variety of cultural samplings, both live and mediated, domestic and from overseas. Although government institutions and policies in the mid- to late twentieth century generally discouraged the evolution of traditional art forms, let alone mixture with those of the increasingly ascendant West, a number of contemporary Korean folk musicians – among others – kept the spirit and essence of the *nanjang* alive. In the 1970s this movement was spearheaded by the folk arts society “Minsogakhoe Shinawi,” the brainchild of the folklorist and activist Shim Usong. The society was founded on three basic principles: 1) to battle or challenge rising insecurity over Korean traditional culture; 2) to re-educate Koreans in their own folk music; and 3) to move gradually away from an aesthetic of preservation toward one of creation (Ch'oe T'aehyon 1991:28–29, 47). Activities and programs were split between the traditional (*chollae*) and the newly-created (*ch'angjak*) and supported both instrumental and dance genres. The society's legacy, however, was secured for posterity in 1978 with the fostering of the percussion-based *samul nori* by two of its regular members, Kim Duk Soo (Kim Toksu) and Kim Yong Bae (Kim Yongbae).

The genesis of *samul nori* is now well known and amply documented (e.g., Kim Honson 1994, 1995). Meaning literally “the playing of four things” (a reference to the two drums and two gongs that form the core of countryside percussion music and dance), it represents essentially the repackaging of a rural phenomenon for an urban, concert-hall audience. By late 1979 after a brief transition period the quartet’s membership had solidified with substitutions by Choi Jong Sil (Ch’oe Chongshil; a fellow society member) and Lee Kwang Soo (Yi Kwangsu). All four performers had childhood experience in folk drumming and dance (*p’ungmul*), and all at least claimed direct ties to itinerant troupes that would have been intimately familiar with the *nanjang* tradition (Howard 1991:540–41; photo documentation for Kim Yong Bae and Lee Kwang Soo is found in Shim Usong 1994:13–14). The initial stated goal of the quartet was to preserve and revive rural percussion pieces from the various provinces (Ch’oe T’aehyon 1991:40), yet ? wandering performance troupe pedigree aside ? two of the artists, Kim Duk Soo and Choi Jong Sil, had been members of the “Little Angels” touring group that had exposed them from a very early age to traveling abroad and playing for foreign audiences (Ku Hee-seo 1994:25–26). That the quartet set sights on a wider audience base is demonstrated through its tours to Japan and the United States already in the early 1980s, to be followed by Western Europe later that decade.

It was under these rather fortuitous conditions ? speaking now from hindsight ? that the *samul nori* practitioners came into contact with the Austrian alto saxophonist Wolfgang Puschnig. In the spring of 1987 Puschnig joined Kim Duk Soo and the others as the lone reed player for a joint “ethnic percussion project” in Europe. Puschnig had from the age of 11 already developed a keen and passionate involvement with East Asian musics (albeit mostly secondhand from recordings), so the close and intimate contact with Kim and the quartet on his home turf was a profound experience on many levels. The Korean percussionists were equally enthralled with Puschnig and his professional activities, so much so that Puschnig and his longtime musical colleague Linda Sharrock (vocalist) by invitation traveled to Seoul that fall to begin a more ambitious collaboration in earnest. Upon their return home, Puschnig with Sharrock formed a Western jazz counterpart to *samul nori*, called “Red Sun (Group),” an ensemble that included the American Jamaaladeen Tacuma on bass and the Austrian Uli Scherer on piano (to be replaced later by the American guitarist Rick Iannacone; Samstag and Lake 1994). It should also be noted that previously, in 1983, the original small gong player, Kim Yong Bae, had left the quartet to start a new and rival group elsewhere, and that subsequently the “original” quartet began to favor the romanization SamulNori (in contrast to “*samul nori*” which had now come to denote a genre).

It was not just general cross-cultural exposure toward which both sides were striving; creative interaction and the fusion of styles, “Yin and Yang, East and West, Rhythm and Melody, [and] Harmony and Modality” (Puschnig 1997), became the *raison d’être* and an ongoing passion for these newly joined musical partners. Over a period of roughly nine years (1988–1997) SamulNori and Red Sun Group carried on this fruitful dialogue through meetings, workshops, and performances, ultimately culminating in the release of four joint recordings. At some point (apparently) it occurred to the members of SamulNori that what they were attempting was the expansion of cultural and artistic limits in a manner that had striking parallels to the earlier world of their ancestors’ *nanjang*. Initial evidence of such thought processes came about in 1994 with the opening track of their second CD, titled “Nanjang (The Meeting Place).” By 1995 a newly renamed “Kim Duk Soo SamulNori” organization (after Choi and Lee’s departures, Kim was the only original member left)

chose the word “Nanjang” as the title of their new studio, record label, studio debut CD (recording #3), and later, a club (in October of 1998). Tradition, it seems, had now come full circle.

It is through an examination of the recordings, however, that we are best able to analyze in more concrete form the success of their overall endeavors. To what extent were SamulNori and Red Sun Group not only able to take advantage of but build upon compatible musical traits inherent in Korean percussion and jazz? Related and equally important to any cross-cultural collaborative effort is the playing out of power relations: Was a truly balanced approach achieved with regard to the composition, recording, and production of the various projects? As we move through the recordings in chronological order I will argue that slowly but surely a true dialogue emerges ? sprinkled with periodic progressions and regressions ? with arguably the most ideal situation achieved on their fourth and last effort. I will then conclude with some brief thoughts and ramifications for the field of musical hybridization that emerge from this newly created sound world.

Recording #1: Red Sun/SamulNori, *Red Sun ? SamulNori*, Polygram, DZ-2433, 1997 [1989]

Personnel: Wolfgang Puschnig (alto saxophone), Linda Sharrock (vocal), Jamaaladeen Tacuma (electric bass), Uli Scherer (piano), Kim Duk Soo (*changgo* [hourglass drum]), Lee Kwang Soo (*kkwaenggwari* [small gong], vocal), Choi Jong Sil (*puk* [barrel drum]), Kang Min Seok (*ching* [large gong])

Recorded: Achau, Austria

Mixed: Vienna, Austria

Produced: Vienna, Austria

Recorded only two years after their first meeting, this self-titled first project was initially released by the Amadeo label (Vienna) in 1989 as an LP, to be re-mastered as a compact disc by Polygram in 1997. Production details and the overall presentation, however, very much reflect a European orientation. All aspects of pre- and post-production took place in Austria, with the roles of producer and executive producer being played by Wolfgang Puschnig (Red Sun) and Wulf Muller respectively. Program notes suggest that all the musicians came together to jointly discuss each track (Yi Chonghak 1997), and compositional responsibilities are shared by all of the participants, yet Red Sun members are positioned in the foreground with regard to the placement of their photographs and quotes in the liner notes, their pairing with SamulNori performers on the front cover, and the listing of Red Sun before SamulNori on the title (although nearly all involved appear in a joint performance photograph on the back cover). Personnel for both ensembles was transitional at this point: Uli Scherer (piano) appears only on this CD, and by this time Kim Yong Bae’s replacement, Kang Min Seok (Kang Minsok), had become a SamulNori regular. Cover art was provided by the vocalist Linda Sharrock; program notes are split evenly between English and Korean.

I should say up front that jazz instrumentalists or vocalists and Korean percussionists being attracted to and finding similarities in each other's musics is not particularly surprising. Language and other cultural obstacles notwithstanding, jazz and Korean folk percussion share a number of core structural traits. Each tradition operates within a cyclical framework: jazz with song forms and chord changes (at least historically speaking), Korean drumming with rhythmic cycles/patterns (*changdan* or *karak* in Korean). Rhythm in general is a prominent feature of both performances, as is a rhythmic base solidly rooted in compound meters (triple division of the beat), the latter observation *not* holding true for the neighboring countries of China and Japan. Both traditions place high importance on the ability and need to improvise, and, accounting for the special case of SamulNori (like their *nanjang* predecessors), both groups of musicians have historically been at the cutting edge of their fields in their looking to other countries and traditions for new musical sounds and structures. The ethnomusicologist Bruno Nettl has suggested that such culturally mixed phenomena is best described as "syncretism" when elements ? musical or otherwise ? between two or more different but participating cultures or peoples are similar or compatible (1983:353), yet importantly (but not necessarily negating Nettl's assertion) neither Red Sun nor SamulNori speak openly of any such structural compatibility.

Needless to say, such commonalities do not ensure a balanced or even musically satisfying end result. For Red Sun and SamulNori the process of achieving a true fusion or meeting of artistic minds as equal partners was long in the making. This process, however, when examined composition by composition, project by project, reveals an exciting and purposeful direction, and for this reason I have chosen the following broad categories to help plot SamulNori's evolving role in this overall transformation:

? background accompaniment: SamulNori (or, in some cases, accompanying Korean musicians) provides only basic rhythmic support in an unobtrusive or less prominent manner; frequently this entails the scaling back or elimination altogether of the small hand-held gong (the *soe*)

? featured: percussion lines (or other more Korean aspects) move sonically and/or compositionally to the foreground while Western instruments or voices continue to play/sing in a secondary role

? featured alone: percussion (or other Korean) instruments play alone

? equal partner: SamulNori and Red Sun Group members contribute to an equal and unified sonic whole ? this is often accomplished by room given to the Korean percussion lines (compositionally and dynamically) and/or the modification of Western scales, timbres, or metrical frames in a Korean manner; or, conversely, the allowance of Western scale or harmonic structures in the overall texture

My strategy in Table 1 (like the tables that follow) is to provide a clear ? if somewhat reductionist ? picture of this relationship at a glance by linking each piece on the recording to one or more of the above categories. I also make note of the rhythmic base of each track as an additional tool for documenting the compositional strategies employed by both organizations.

Returning now to the recording at hand, *Red Sun ? SamulNori* strikes me in many ways as being fragmented in its overall approach. Korean percussion pieces are juxtaposed in regular alternation with “fusion” pieces, so that we hear only members of SamulNori on tracks 2, 4, 6, 8, and 10. An immediate and perhaps obvious explanation of this presentational format is that SamulNori is providing an introduction to Korean drumming for Western European audiences ostensibly unfamiliar with the music. This would seem to be borne out as well by the wide sampling of rhythmic patterns used throughout the course of the recording: regional pieces from the core SamulNori repertoire on tracks 2, 5, 8, and 11; shaman rhythms on tracks 3 and 7; a rearranged movement from the *p’ungmul* repertoire on track 6; a pan-Korean rhythm on track 9; and modified or invented rhythms (unnamed in the program notes) on tracks 1, 4, 10, and 12 (refer to figure 1). An examination of the remaining tracks (those with both groups participating), however, reveals a struggle to reconcile the two traditions. With the exception of track 12 (and briefly on tracks 7 and 11), it is as if the musicians do not know how to accommodate or integrate the powerful sound of the Korean drums and gongs. SamulNori is either employed as background accompaniment ? frequently with a scaled-back small gong sound ? or is featured alone, interaction easily equivalent to “I’ve taken my turn, now I’ll let you take yours.”

A brief discussion of two compositions will illustrate the above points clearly. The first piece on the CD, “Spirit Warriors” (co-written by Puschnig and Sharrock), opens with SamulNori pounding out a straightforward beat equivalent to Western 4/4 in near unison that does not let up for the full duration of the work. Brief interactions between the vocalist and small gong player aside, Korean percussion here only provides a basic groove that could have easily been provided by a drum set or synthesizer, with more or less the same effect. On track 3, “More Than Ever,” SamulNori plays an

Table 1: Recording #1 Particulars

Track Title	Rhythmic Base	Role of SamulNori
Spirit Warriors	modified/invented rhythm	background accompaniment
The K’kwaenggwari	<i>Uttari p’ungmul</i>	featured alone
More than Ever	<i>p’unori</i>	background accompaniment; featured alone
The Buk	modified/invented rhythm	featured alone
Far Horizon	<i>Samdo solchanggo karak</i>	background accompaniment; featured alone
Ho-Ho Kut	<i>Ho ho kut</i>	featured alone
O-Lim (Ascension)	<i>orimch’ae</i>	featured alone (briefly); background accompaniment; equal partner
The Changgo	<i>Samdo solchanggo karak</i>	featured alone
Golden Bird	<i>chinyang</i>	background accompaniment

The Ching	modified/invented rhythm	featured alone
No Secrets	<i>Pinari</i>	featured alone (briefly): background accompaniment (moments as equal partner)
Places in Time (Puchong)	modified/invented rhythm	equal partner

even less prominent role for the first few minutes by punctuating an otherwise strictly jazz performance aesthetic with occasional bursts of sound. Korean percussion then emerges, approaching equal partnership with the jazz instrumentalists, but just as the promise of a true dialogue is offered ? foreshadowing more successful ventures on subsequent releases ? one by one Red Sun members drop out leaving SamulNori to explore the rhythmic cycle alone. The piece then ends as disjunctively as it began, leaving the listener (at least myself) pondering what might and could have been.

Recording #2: Red Sun/SamulNori, *Then Comes the White Tiger*, ECM, ECM-1499, 1994

Personnel: Wolfgang Puschnig (alto saxophone, alto flute), Linda Sharrock (vocal), Rick Iannacone (electric guitar), Jamaaladeen Tacuma (electric bass), Kim Duk Soo (*changgo* [hourglass drum], *p'iri* [oboe], *hojok* [oboe with funnel], *ching* [large gong]), Lee Kwang Soo (*kkwaengwari* [small gong], vocal, *ching*), Kang Min Seok (*puk* [barrel drum], *ching*), Kim Woon Tae (*puk*, *ching*, *para* [cymbals]), Kim Sung Woon (*komun'go* [zither], *kayagum* [zither])

Recorded: Seoul, Korea

Mixed: [information not provided]

Produced: Munich, Germany

A substantial period of time separates *Then Comes the White Tiger* from the initial collaboration (nearly four years). Here the Red Sun lineup had become fixed with the substitution of Rick Iannacone on electric guitar. SamulNori, on the other hand, continued to be in a state of flux, as in 1990 Choi Jong Sil left the group to enter university and was replaced by Kim Woon Tae (Kim Unt'ae). Despite the extra Korean musician (a zither player), and the expansion in instrumentation by SamulNori members ? additional woodwind and percussion instruments are added to the standard "*samul*" (two drums and two gongs) mix ? the recording in terms of production still leans in favor of their Euro-American counterparts. Significantly the base recordings were made on the Koreans' home turf of Seoul, yet mixing (most likely) and final producing were carried out in Germany by Wolfgang Puschnig. Red Sun members are still listed first on the title and personnel list, and they are given credit for composing the majority of the pieces, but interestingly the only photo included with the program notes is of SamulNori in full traditional costume performing while dancing (inside back cover). Linda Sharrock was

responsible for the cover design, and again program notes are nicely balanced between Korean and English.

A cursory glance at this CD's table of contents suggests that the Korean musicians still felt a sense of duty in introducing their musical culture to foreign audiences, with solo tracks by SamulNori playing the opening rhythmic sequences of the piece *Yongnam nongak* on "Kil-Kun-Ak" (track 3), Kim Duk Soo playing the double-reed wind instrument *p'iri* on "Piri" (track 5), and Kim Sung Woon (Kim

Figure 1: Rhythms Incorporated in Recordings (roman numeral = project #; number in parentheses = number of occurrences on project)

Core Repertoire (Compositions): *Uttari p'ungmul* I (1), IV (2); *Samdo solchanggo karak* I (2), II (2), III (1), IV (1); *Pinari* I (1), II (1); *Yongnam nongak* II (1), III (1), IV (2); *Honam nongak* IV (5)

P'ungmul Repertoire (Compositions): *Ho ho kut* I (1)

Shaman Repertoire (Compositions): *shinawi* III (1)

Shaman Rhythms: *p'unori* I (1), III (1); *orimch'ae* I (1); *pujong nori* II (1); *tangak* III (1)

Pan-Korean Rhythms: *chinyang* I (1), II (1); *chungmori* II (3); *chajinmori* III (1); *onmori* III (1); *insagut* IV (1)

Modified/Invented Rhythms (Unnamed): I (4); II (1); III (1)

Songun) playing the plucked-string zither *komun'go* on "Komungo" (track 8). And, in fact, the Korean program notes specifically identify the purpose of these latter two tracks as "introducing a Korean feeling to foreign countries" (Chu Chaeyon 1994). A broad range of rhythmic patterns is explored as well, with excerpts from the core repertoire (tracks 1, 3, 6, 9, and 10), shaman rhythms (track 4), pan-Korean rhythms (tracks 5, 7, 8, and 11), and modified/invented rhythms (track 2; refer to figure 1). But unlike *Red Sun ? SamulNori* in which the remaining pieces wrestled with finding a common meeting ground, here we see a rapid and remarkable transformation toward equal partnership, as SamulNori only plays the role of background accompaniment on tracks 4 ("Hear Them Say") and 9 ("Full House ? Part I"; see table 2). It would seem that the time spent in gestation proved to be a true artistic watershed.

This newly found relationship is no more apparent than on the opening composition, appropriately titled "Nanjang (The Meeting Place)" (where, by way of a side note, the title of this CD is sung as lyrics in English, an indirect reference to the Chinese legend of the White Tiger and Blue Serpent). From the introductory strains we know we have entered a very different soundscape: one by one Korean and Western instruments enter, led by the barrel drum (*puk*) and large gong (*ching*), followed by the electric bass and guitar, layer by layer, timbre by timbre, creating a dense and overlapping rhythmic texture that builds in intensity until its release with the onset of text. The approach taken here in the opening by Red Sun members is remarkably similar to that of late soul, early funk groups in the United States ? parallels which end here! ? who treated their "melodic" instruments in a percussive manner, playing repetitive short phrases or riffs over a static harmonic background (Puschnig on alto saxophone in particular seems to be consciously imitating

a small gong line). Texts are sung in Korean and English, and both Korean drums and Western strings and woodwinds work as cohorts in responding at the proper times to these lyrics, a musical dialogue with give and take. The partnership is equal because of the room given to the Korean percussionists, both compositionally and dynamically, and because of the Red Sun members' understanding and modification of metrical frameworks and cadences in a Korean manner.

A different but equally successful tack is taken on the seventh track, "Flute Sanjo." *Sanjo*, a widely popular and respected South Korean traditional music genre and form, refers generally to an individual string or wind instrument accompanied by the *changgo* hourglass drum. A *sanjo* performance represents a suite of movements performed one after the other without break, gradually increasing in speed, with each movement named after the rhythmic pattern or cycle that dictates its internal organization and logic. On this track an alto flute (Puschnig) is matched with the drum (Kim Duk Soo) in an original and surprising way. Instead of trying to crudely imitate the sound of a Korean flute (such as the *taegum*) or mimic the pitch bending and microtonal shading characteristic of traditional practice, the flute line remains adamantly within Western scales and gestures. The drum accompaniment is tasteful and exactly what one would expect in *sanjo*-inspired interaction, and despite an atmospheric harmonic base provided by the electric guitar and the fact that this piece does not move beyond the *chinyang* rhythmic cycle (the opening and slowest of the movements), the balance and overall aesthetic is decidedly and satisfyingly both Korean *and* Western.

Table 2: Recording #2 Particulars

Track Title	Rhythmic Base	Role of SamulNori
Nanjang (The Meeting Place)	<i>Pinari</i>	equal partner
Peaceful Question	modified/invented rhythm	equal partner

Kil-Kun-Ak	<i>Yongnam nongak</i>	featured alone
Hear Them Say	<i>pujong nori</i>	background accompaniment: equal partner (briefly)
Piri	<i>chungmori</i>	featured alone
Soo Yang Kol (The Valley of Weeping Willows)	<i>Samdo solchanggo karak</i>	equal partner
Flute Sanjo	<i>chinyang</i>	equal partner
Komungo	<i>chungmori</i>	featured alone
Full House ? Part I	<i>Samdo solchanggo karak</i>	background accompaniment
Full House ? Part II	(<i>Samdo solchanggo karak</i>)	equal partner
Far Away / Ariang [sic]	<i>chungmori</i>	equal partner

Recording #3: SamulNori, *Nanjang: A New Horizon*, King, KSC-4150A, 1995

Personnel: Kim Duk Soo (*changgo* [hourglass drum]), Kang Min Seok (*puk* [barrel drum]), Kim Jung Hee (*kkwaenggwari* [small gong], *moktak* [wooden slit gong]), Kim Jung Kuk (*ching* [large gong], *para* [cymbals]), Wolfgang Puschnig (alto saxophone, alto flute, bass clarinet), Linda Sharrock (vocal), Rick Iannacone (electric guitar, 12-string guitar), Jamaaladeen Tacuma (electric bass), Ahn Sook Sun (vocal), Kim Jae Young (*p'iri* [oboe], *t'aep'yongso* [oboe with funnel], *taegum* [flute]), Lee Tae Baek (*ajaeng* [zither], *kayagum* [zither]), Kang Kwon Soon (vocal), Koo Joon Yub (rapper)

Recorded: Seoul, Korea

Mixed: London, England and Seoul, Korea

Produced: Seoul, Korea

1995 proved to be an important milestone for Kim Duk Soo and SamulNori. As mentioned previously, it was the year “Nanjang” became the title and emblem of the group’s new studio, record label, and studio debut CD (this third recording). In the program notes we see for the first time reference to the quartet being called “Kim Toksu [Duk Soo] p’ae samul nori” (Kim Duk Soo’s [group] SamulNori), and, in fact, Kim is the only member given credit for composing/arranging the “traditional” tracks. This coincided with Lee Kwang Soo’s departure ? the last remaining original member ? and the establishment of the SamulNori foundation “SamulNori Hanullim” under the leadership of Kim. Rising success and recognition at home led to SamulNori’s performance the same year with the KBS Symphony Orchestra at the United Nations in celebration of the 50th anniversary of

both the U.N.'s founding and Korea's liberation (Lee Sang-man 1995:82). Track 6 on this third project, "Celebration," pays special tribute to these events.

In striking contrast to the first two collaborations, it is perfectly clear with *Nanjang: A New Horizon* that SamulNori is now in firm control. With the exception of the cover illustration by Sharrock (perhaps she has contemplated a side career in art?), nearly all aspects of the production took place in Seoul. Despite a certain amount of musical give and take between the two groups documented in the program notes (with all members of Red Sun contributing toward compositional duties; Hong 1995), the CD title and jacket oddly lists only SamulNori. This latter observation, in all fairness, might also reflect a certain grace with which Red Sun decided to step back into the shadows so as not to steal any of the limelight or initial fanfare surrounding the opening of the Koreans' new production complex. Program notes, also for the first time, now include Korean script for track titles alongside their English counterparts.

In many aspects this third CD is the most diverse of the joint projects, both in inspiration and in aural palette. Red Sun members expand on previous instrumentation (Puschnig with bass clarinet, Iannacone with 12-string guitar), and SamulNori is complemented by additional wind, string, and vocal artists from South Korea. The various tracks draw from a wide variety of predominantly Korean

Table 3: Recording #3 Particulars

Track Title	Rhythmic Base	Role of SamulNori
Rabbit Story	<i>chajinmori</i>	equal partner
Things Change	<i>Samdo solchanggo karak</i>	background accompaniment
One Step to Never	<i>p'unori</i>	equal partner
Meditation	[not applicable]	featured
Arirang	<i>ŏnmori</i>	equal partner
Celebration	<i>Yongnam nongak</i>	equal partner
Water Drops	modified/invented rhythm	background accompaniment
Mother Child	<i>tangak</i>	equal partner
Shinawi	<i>shinawi</i>	equal partner/featured

rhythms and performance traditions, representing samplings from the court and countryside, the secular and the sacred. Folk singing styles form the foundation of "Rabbit Story" (*p'ansori*; track 1) and "Arirang" (folk song; track 5), literati genres in the vein of *shijo* or *kagok* are implied on "Meditation" (track 4), farmers' drumming and marching underpin "Celebration" (track 6), and shaman-inspired ritual and dance music is

heard on “One Step to Never” (track 3), “Mother Child” (track 8), and “Shinawi” (track 9; see table 3). On track 2, “Things Change,” which notes claim is based on the *tongsalp’uri* rhythmic pattern (found in the core repertoire piece *Samdo solchanggo karak*; refer to figure 1), we are actually presented with a modified reggae beat, complete with rapping in Korean! (With little effort, I might add, one could present a convincing argument for rap’s place in “traditional” Korean pop.) Accordingly, this recording fulfills an introductory role reminiscent of its two predecessors, but with an important difference? SamulNori is now introducing Korean music to *Koreans*. Kim Duk Soo and his organization act as a much more proactive agent in this process; while Korean percussion does take second chair as background accompaniment on “Things Change” and “Water Drops,” they meet in the middle as equal partners for the rest, even surpassing Red Sun on “Meditation” and “Shinawi” where SamulNori for the first time becomes the feature presentation.

The recording opens and closes with (in my mind) the most innovative and successful of all the compositions, musical bookends if you will, that represent two of the more popular and persuasive forms of folk music enjoyed in South Korea today. Track 1, “Rabbit Story,” is a reworking of the classic *p’ansori* tale *Sugungga*, or *Song of the Underwater Palace*. Where traditional *p’ansori* is realized through a single singer/storyteller and lone drummer, here SamulNori and Red Sun weave Korean and Western wind, string, and percussion instruments into a rich tapestry that nonetheless retains the openness or spaciousness of a *p’ansori* performance. *Ajaeng* (zither), *kayagum* (zither), *taegum* (flute), gongs and drums, electric bass, electric guitar, and alto saxophone all make their presence known in significant yet subtle ways, a delicate balance of implied Western harmonic structures and Korean scalar, modal, and rhythmic forms that does not distract from or overpower the vocal prowess of the highly revered Ahn Sook Sun (An Sukson). On track 9, “Shinawi,” even as the bass and electric guitar lines continue to provide a loose harmonic realization of the piece, Puschnig on saxophone joins his Korean melodic counterparts as an improviser and commentator playing within Korean frameworks of scale and gesture that characterize the shamanistic *shinawi* genre on which this composition is based. Korean (Ahn) and English (Sharrock) singers and texts further interact and intermingle, and while the approach on the whole favors the Korean camp, we nevertheless witness both here and on track 1 the (early) fulfillment of the promise made by Puschnig in the program notes to their fourth and last collaboration, the true fusion of “Yin and Yang, East and West, Rhythm and Melody, [and] Harmony and Modality” (1997).

Recording #4: Kim Duk Soo SamulNori & Red Sun Group, *From the Earth, to the Sky*, Samsung, SCO-123NAN, 1997

Personnel: Kim Duk Soo (*changgo* [hourglass drum], vocal), Kang Min Seok (*puk* [barrel drum]), Kim Bok Man (*kkwaenggwari* [small gong]), Jang Hyun Jin (*ching* [large gong]), Park An Ji (*kkwaenggwari*), Kim Dong Won (*changgo*, *puk*, vocal), Park Hun Kyu (*kkwaenggwari*, *puk*, vocal), Wolfgang Puschnig (alto saxophone, vocal), Rick Iannacone (electric guitar, vocal), Jamaaladeen Tacuma (electric bass, vocal), Linda Sharrock (vocal), Kim Byung Chan (vocal), Kim Yong Hoon (vocal)

Recorded: Seoul, Korea

Mixed: Seoul, Korea

Produced: Seoul, Korea

Viewed in isolation, *From the Earth, to the Sky* would seem to represent an essentially Korean enterprise. All aspects of the production took place in Seoul: Korean program notes are much more extensive and detailed than the English; Korean musicians outnumber Western ones by 9 to 4; cover art ? breaking with tradition ? is provided by a Korean painter, in this case Lee Ufan (Yi Uwan); and SamulNori (preceded now officially by Kim Duk Soo's name) is listed before Red Sun in the title and on the personnel roster. Taken as the fourth and final puzzle piece of a complex whole, however, it completes a balanced picture: two recordings on European soil, two on South Korean. Program notes, track titles, and the overall feel of the CD intimate a sense of finality, the end of a certain phase in the creative lives of these two groups. The release is, furthermore, a tribute to Kim Duk Soo specifically, marking his 40th anniversary as a performer (Howard 1999:76); in this context it is worth noting that along with Kang Min Seok, Kim is the only remaining member from the first recording made with Red Sun back in the late 1980s.

At a deeper musical and philosophical level, however, *From the Earth* achieves a unified focus and balance lacking in the previous three attempts. It is as if the musicians met this one last time with the sole purpose of stripping away all extraneous and distracting details, moving beyond concerns of national or cultural identity, to get down in earnest to the task at hand, the true "meeting of traditional Korean music and jazz, ... a new [yet] completely natural music of our own" (Kim Duk Soo 1997). In its scaled-back instrumentation ? the additional Korean musicians mostly doubling on gongs or drums, or providing backup vocals ? and restricted rhythmic samplings (only two of the total six categories are drawn from; refer to figure 1), both sides finally felt free within this external simplicity to delve deeper and with more complexity into each of their own respective traditions. Red Sun is harmonically and melodically much more adventurous in spirit and practice, while SamulNori is sonically more at ease with the conventional full sound and resonance of the gongs. The "meeting" occurred in the realms of rhythm and improvisation: Red Sun exhibited their perhaps greatest awareness of Korean rhythmic frameworks, especially irregular meters (although they had previous practice on CD #1, track 7 [Western equivalent to 10/8], CD #2, track 4 [7/4], and CD #3, track 5 [also 10/8]); and both ensembles explored the possibilities and limits of improvisation at a new level, a shared core structural trait highlighted in previous discussion. Puschnig speaks to such issues in the program notes:

From the clash of musical worlds (yet there is already a feeling of natural togetherness) on the first CD (Amadeo/Polygram), past the reflective but energetic mood of the second one (on ECM), to the third “Nanjang: A New Horizon” (opening up to more sounds of Korean voices and instruments) and finally to this latest one ? “From the earth, to the sky” ? we covered a vast field of musical possibilities and expressions by giving and taking from each other. Looking back, I can see that they were all natural and logical steps in our development as a unity, leading us to now. (1997)

Significantly no individuals or groups are singled out as composers for the various tracks in the liner notes ? a first; and in this anonymity their unity is completed.

Two tracks illustrate quite clearly this melding of traditions, largely (and ironically) through the process of letting go. On track 3, “Burdens of Life,” SamulNori and Red Sun approach the piece as what might best be described as an old-fashioned “jam session.” Undergirded by the rhythmic patterns *p’ungnyugut* (*chilgut*) and *kutkori* from the *Honam nongak* core repertoire (see table 4), the musicians follow a standard jazz format by opening with an introductory section, or “head,” followed by solos taken by the various members in turn. Beginning with alto saxophone, then moving on to electric guitar, SamulNori alone, and Sharrock singing English text, each performer through improvisation explores rhythmically and melodically (for the Western instrumentalists) established meters and key

Table 4: Recording #4 Particulars

Track Title	Rhythmic Base	Role of SamulNori
Prologue (Reaching Out)	<i>Honam nongak</i> <i>Uttari p’ungmul</i>	featured
The Road Ahead	<i>Honam nongak</i>	equal partner
Burdens of Life	<i>Honam nongak</i>	equal partner
Going Places	<i>Honam nongak</i>	featured
Dance of Devotion	<i>Honam nongak</i>	equal partner
Another Step to the Sky	<i>Samdo solchanggo karak</i> <i>Yongnam nongak</i>	equal partner
Round Up	<i>Yongnam nongak</i> <i>Uttari p’ungmul</i>	equal partner/featured
Epilogue (The End is the Beginning)	<i>insagut</i>	equal partner

signatures over a Korean percussion section that likewise improvises and interacts with the soloists in the role of a good jazz drummer (or an accomplished *p’ansori* accompanist

for that matter). The performance ends with a brief coda, and while thematically it is unrelated to the head (*unlike* standard jazz practice), it mirrors it in instrumentation and general atmosphere, bringing the piece to a satisfying close.

The album and much of its collected reserves really climaxes with track 7, ending as many SamulNori concerts do with the featuring of the “dueling small gongs,” a practice known more officially in Korean as *tchaksoe*. Once a basic groove has been established by the hourglass and barrel drums, the two small gong players then hold a conversation in a musical call and response, commenting and interlocking in ever-more complex patterns. Tacuma on bass joins the drums with his own groove, tension building and building until a final burst of near-ecstatic energy from all members of both ensembles. From here it moves without break to track 8, a minute-long rendition of the rhythmic pattern *insagut*, literally (and fittingly) meaning “greeting/parting ritual.” Like the close of a countryside celebration, the sound of *insagut* sends the weary and yet refreshed participants home with the promise to meet again; in the words of the subtitle to this last track, “The end is the beginning.”

Conclusion

At the time of this writing (2002), to the best of my knowledge, no further direct collaboration at the group level has occurred. And while four is an incomplete and superstitiously avoided number throughout much of East Asia, for SamulNori and Red Sun it marked the successful completion of nearly a decade of purposeful and meaningful action. On the earlier recordings it began as more of a creative struggle to join disparate but not completely incompatible musical structures and sounds, coupled to a perceived need to explain or introduce Korean music to both native and foreign audiences. Later efforts show the fruits of this labor as both sides, through mutual understanding and an ongoing process of give and take, emerge as equal partners engaged in a true dialogue. This culminated in the uniformly most focused and balanced of the projects, *From the Earth, to the Sky*, in which a streamlined instrumentation and limited categorical use of rhythm gave room for the most adventurous and yet respectful exploration of a creative middle ground, largely through the process of improvisation. The direction and use of the rhythmic patterns over the course of the four CDs reflect this focus and balance as well? slowly we see the move from more eclectic sampling and non-traditional patterns or cycles toward the more established regional or core repertoire where SamulNori musicians are most at home (see figure 1).

This mixture or fusion of styles in which both parties retain elements of their local tradition concurrently with the adoption or accommodation of aspects of the other is frequently referred to as “hybridization.” The ethnomusicologist Margaret Kartomi in her landmark article on musical culture contact, however, has astutely recognized that “hybrid” when applied to a music tends to be pejorative in tone, drawing attention away from the newly formed product toward its parentage (1981:229). She, too, favors the use of “syncretism” for such encounters, very much like Bruno Nettl as cited at the beginning of this article, but with a slightly different nuance. For Kartomi, the degree of musical similarity or compatibility does *not* generally dictate the likelihood of two (or more) musical cultures or strains to join (1981:241–44), although in the case of SamulNori and Red Sun we would be unwise to dismiss summarily shared core structural traits that certainly contributed to

each other's initial interest in the other's music. Nevertheless, Kartomi and Nettl in their above work speak of such syncretism as a more or less semi-permanent state in which participants either further refine the newly formed "tradition" or continue to look outward toward other new vistas. For SamulNori and Red Sun, in contrast, this meeting of minds and energies was only temporary, occupying a fixed moment of time, only to dissolve at the completion of the fourth recording. Because these groups went back to their homes (geographical and cultural) and have not, again to my knowledge, altered in a radical way their "regular" means of conceptualizing and performing their respective musics, we might best refer to such a convergence as "momentary syncretism."

The ideal of the *nanjang*? a safe forum for the interaction of different musical and cultural identities? is an attractive one for early twenty-first century societies who continue to grapple with problems of misunderstanding and indifference. SamulNori and Red Sun created such a space through *musical* conversation, bringing to the common table a respect and understanding of each other's approaches and traditions. What they accomplished, through trial and error, was by no means a small or easy task. They succeeded, in the end, by establishing a new repertoire that acknowledged the sources rooted in Korean folk percussion and Western jazz, at the same time highlighting the flowering of something fresh and wondrous. In the process, they also touched on our shared humanity.

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