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## **1- Introduction and Acknowledgements**

This report outlines the practical studies, research and the teaching methodologies of the Drum - Dance styles of Korea.

To have a focused and intensive period of study and exchange was an invaluable experience both professionally and personally. With gratitude I would like to acknowledge the support of the Winston Churchill Memorial Trust for an opportunity of a lifetime.

I would also like to thank my teachers and mentors, Reinhard and Cornelia Flatischler, both who originally sparked my passion and curiosity for traditional Korean percussion.

My sincere thanks to the great artists and teachers who so generously shared their skills and knowledge during my time in Korea, including Mr Kim Duk Soo, Mr Kim Dong Juan, Miss Kim In Suk, Mr Kim Song Hoon, Mr Shin Chan Sun, Mr Jang Hyun Jin, and Ms Yoo Sol Jung. Their enthusiasm for sharing and exchanging their traditional music was boundless, their collective skills were like I had never experienced, and their pure joy and energy was completely infectious!

Thanks to Jenny, my guide and translator who helped me enormously.

## 2- Executive Summary

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### Fellowship highlights

1-Studies with Miss Kim In Suk - Sam Go Mu style (three drum dance style) and Soljanggu classes with Mr Kim Song Hoon.

2-Lectures presented by Mr Kim Duk Soo at the Puyeo Academy of SamulNori Percussion.  
-Kim Duk Su's personal story and the history of the SamulNori music group.

3-Intensive studies with and observing the master classes, rehearsals and performances of three of the finest SamulNori group members including:  
Mr Shin - Soljanggu dance  
Mr Jang - Pan Gut dance  
Ms Yoo Sol Jung - Utari Rhythm

4-Attending traditional and contemporary percussion, dance and music performances and workshops in Seoul, including:  
**Knock** - Classical / Contemporary Percussion Ensemble  
**Nanta** - Contemporary Percussion / Dance / Theatre performance  
**Tokebi Storm** - Contemporary / Traditional - Percussion / Dance / Martial arts / Theatre  
**The National Centre for Korean Traditional Performing Arts** - Traditional music, dance, and open workshop program.  
**The Chong Dong Theatre Traditional Performing Arts Troupe** performances and open workshop program

5-An invitation by Kim Duk Soo to the Samulnori Music Competitions, (September 2004/05)

#### Lessons and Conclusions in brief,

- That language, history, philosophy and music are inextricably linked and acknowledged in the teaching methodologies of Korean traditional music.
- SamulNori music and drum-dance music strongly emphasises flow, movement, breath, phonetics (drum language), internal and external landscape (visualisation), harmony or balance and emotions.
- The mentoring process across age groups is highly regarded as an efficient and important aspect of teaching music and dance, and has been pivotal in building a large core of master teachers.

My studies in Korean drum - dance and percussion were invaluable in opening areas to do with rhythm vocabulary, percussion arrangements, *drum dance* techniques, and teaching methods.

The opportunity to study these percussive styles and methods in their cultural context was invaluable to understanding the essence of Korean folkloric percussion music, its deeper philosophy, and history from which it has been uniquely shaped.

My fellowship has inspired me to continue developing my drum teaching with a further emphasis on movement, voice and visualisation.

I will be offering development workshops to primary school age groups as well as offering professional development workshops to Primary school teachers.

With my new skills I also intend to continue actively, my exploration of Korean Percussion elements in my original jazz and world music compositions. A recording project is set to take place in 2005.

### **3 - Programme 2004**

#### **2 July -14 July**

Seoul, South Korea

Chong Dong Theatre Open workshops

National Centre for Korean Traditional Performing Arts -workshops with Miss Kim In Suk - Three-drum dance and Mr Kim Yong Joo - Janggu drum.

#### **18th July - 15th August**

Puyo, Ch'ungchong province of Korea,

SamulNori Group / Hanullim Meeting with SamulNori member- Mr Kim Dong Juan

SamulNori Academy Intensive workshop program

Utari - Rhythm

Soljanggu Karak- Hourglass drum-dance

Pan Gut - Farmers drum-dance (Nongak)

Soljanggu - Rhythm and dance

#### **17 August - 18 August**

Seoul, Korea

Korean Conservatorium of Performing Arts - Miss Yoo Sol Jung

#### **Drum Dance pieces studied**

Sam Go Mu (Three drum dance) with Kim In Suk

Soljanggu (Concert piece) Puyo School

Pan Gut (Ensemble dance also known as farmer music) Puyo School

Utari Rhythm (Concert piece) Puyo School

**Sam-go Mu** is a three-drum dance, which dates back to the Chosun Dynasty. Traditional rhythms form the structure of the piece and there are as many versions of the Sam-go-mu dance as there are teachers and schools. It is an ancient yet evolving percussive dance tradition that has been passed down from teacher to student and to date there is no knowledge of written documentation or notation.

There are various ways, instrumentally, in which these rhythms and dances are performed, including a five-drum version (O-Go Mu) and Taego versions (floor drums) as well as a large barrel single drums similar in shape to the Japanese Taiko drum.

**Soljanggu** (hour glass drum dance) is one of the most physically challenging and musically demanding thirty-minute drum-dance works in the repertoire of Korean traditional percussion, also performed as a concert piece.

**Pan Gut** A form of Nong-ak or farmers music, which emphasises circular movements and natural flowing formations while playing the four key SamulNori instruments. An ensemble performing in this style can be as few as four or over 40!

Players wear Sam-go hats with long ribbons attached to the crown, and as they move the ribbons spiral and circle around them. A visually exciting and playful style, the Pan Gut is a very popular Korean drum dance style. It is particularly accessible and is structured in a way so as to accommodate varying levels of players.

I will be developing rhythms, movements and game based pieces based around the Pan Gut dances and drumming, which I intend to use in my drumming workshops for primary school age children.

## 4 - Fellowship Description

### 4.1 Advanced Teaching Methods

My time in Korea was largely practical and intensive with up to eight hours a day of instruction, private practice and the opportunity to observe master level players in rehearsal, master class settings and in performance. It was an extraordinary opportunity to immerse fully and intensively in the traditional percussion music of Korea.

The complexity of the rhythmic structures, arrangements and techniques that are taught at all learning levels, as well as the teaching methods employed, have created an extraordinary level of mastery in drum dance percussion, and Korea's traditional music in general.

I was often speechless after performances and workshops, which were both inspiring and demanding.

What I would expect from a three to four year old musically, rhythmically and conceptually was also continually challenged during my time in Korea. As a teacher committed to rhythm, music and movement education for adults and children it was exciting to witness such advanced abilities and to have the opportunity to observe various teaching processes which heavily emphasised training in mixed age groups, mixed abilities and mentoring. Younger players were also encouraged to observe master classes in an informal and very open setting.

The Puye Academy has been directly responsible for the training of a whole new generation of SamulNori musicians and is now celebrating the emerging of a second generation of master players and teachers.

There is now a generation of young Korean traditional percussionists between ten and thirteen years of age playing at the advanced to professional level. Those now in their early to mid 20's are becoming masters of their instruments and approximately 60% of these emerging master percussionists are woman. This is generally not the norm in other drum cultures including the western tradition of drumming.

When I quizzed some players about this and expressed that it was unusual to see so many female drummers in a particular style, they were surprised and confused at the same time.

They explained that there is an emphasis on balance and harmony and to have groups of mixed gender was preferable as it was an important aspect of creating the *whole*.

I did however observe that there were as many all male and all female groups as well as mixed groups performing in the SamulNori style, yet costumed and performing from a distance, the gender make up of a group was never really clear. I found this a very interesting aspect of Korean percussion and the playing style. Individual players seemed to have a balance of both masculine and feminine qualities as players, which seemed to be a strong focus in the drum teaching and performance.

### 4.2 ENSEMBLE FOCUS

Many masters as opposed to a few special or gifted leaders seemed to be the theme of Korean ensemble music.

It is a strong belief that to play and create together as equals in an ensemble of virtuosos is more conducive to learning and creativity, more enjoyable, and ultimately produces the dynamic and energetic group music for which Korean traditional percussionists are well known.

Ultimately the show of respect for leaders regardless of gender or age, and the lack of emphasis on competition has, I believe contributed to a dynamic, and thriving culture of musicians and teachers who truly 'play' in all aspects of the word. This no doubt also has to do with the character of the Korean people, which I found at all times to be extremely humble, generous and always curious.

#### 4.3 DRUMMING TRADITION AND INTENTION

The acknowledgment that drumming is synonymous with spirituality reflects the way it is taught and the way it is received by musicians and listeners alike.

There is also an intention or energetic focus which underpins the traditional music of Korea. Its purpose being to adrenalize and excite or to induce a deep sense of reflection or relaxation, as well as continue the ancient oral tradition of story telling and history through music and song. Emphasis and flow is also explained in a context to do with the origin of a piece, to do with its landscape, historical struggle or particular climate. There was a fascinating richness, philosophy and history behind the music and rhythms that I was taught and there was always a great pride in sharing these deeper elements.

#### 4.4 A UNIQUE TEACHING PROCESS

Rhythms are taught phonetically, and particular vocal sounds are used for each instrument.

The phonetic system emphasises the feel, indicates positions as well as explains the rhythm in terms of where it connects to the underlying pulsation.

The drum language also emphasises the circular nature in which a drum is played and this directly connects to a musician's breath and movement. The vocalising, moving and playing are therefore integral to the playing and the resultant sounds that are produced on the drums or instrument. It was often mentioned that if you don't employ these ho-hup or movement techniques your rhythm might be from Korea but it won't sound Korean. The tempo of a piece is also dictated by breath and movement which allows for flexibility and spontaneity, as musicians work together towards a synchronicity and an open sense of 'time'. These elements give Korean music a distinct feel, which cannot be notated but must be actively experienced.

#### 4.5 A BRIEF HISTORY OF AN ANCIENT TRADITION

Korean traditional Music is intimately linked to the Korean people's constitution and character.

It is derived from Korea's climate, landscape, religion and philosophy. It can also be classified into broader categories to do with the intellectual and the emotional.

These two categories are known as Chong-ak and Minsok-ak.

Minsok-ak can be compared to folk or popular music. It is emotional, direct and is often described as unrestrained.

Chong-ak is the classical or court music of Korea. Described as solemn, intellectual, dignified. It tends to have the effect of creating calm.

My time in Korea was spent mainly studying the styles of the Minsok-ak and in particular the drum- dance repertoire, which was originally known as farmer's music, or Nong-ak and PungMul.

I did however during my concert visits experience court music performances which clearly emphasised the use of breath as the fundamental pulse in the music. This theory of breath and pulse or ho-hup, which also means harmony, is the foundation of all teachings of the traditional performing arts. It stems from philosophies to do with um (yin) and yang and which acknowledge that all things have an opposite and are ultimately connected. 'Pulse' and 'Flow' 'Tension' and 'Release', and generally the theme of opposites became a very important aspect of my studies in Korea.

In terms of the Nong-ak style there are no historical records that authentically document the origin and development of farmer's music and dance. It is generally believed that the style can be traced back to ancient times when Korean tribesmen established farming settlements. (This is based on the similarities of the dance movements to actual farming activities.) Historically festivals were held at the time of sowing in May and harvesting in October, where people gathered to sing and dance in circles and formations to set rhythms and music.

The four main percussion instruments were an integral part of these gatherings, and each instrument represents an element of nature.

*The K'kwaenggwari (Lightening) is a small gong.*

*The player of this instrument takes the lead in farmer's music, producing rhythm and exchanging dialogue with the drums by signaling musical transitions.*

*The Ching or Jing (Wind) is a large gong similar in shape to the K'kwaenggwari.*

*The Changgo or Janggu (Rain) is often called the Hour-glass drum, which refers to its actual shape.*

*The Buk or Puk (Clouds) is a barrel drum or bass drum.*

In the 1300's farmers music and dance became influenced by the Nam-sadang. The Sadang, similar to wandering minstrels, earned their living travelling and performing their music and acrobatic style dances. Once the Nam-sadang began to settle and farm, their style of dance and music merged with the existing farmers music, creating an even more festive, energetic and acrobatic style of Nong-ak performance.

Kim Duk Soo, founder of the SamulNori drum dance group and Puye Academy, comes from this long tradition of Nam-sadang.

As a child Mr Kim travelled and trained with his father master percussionist, Kim Mun Hak and by the age of seven, had received the prestigious President's Award, he quickly became known as a child prodigy of the drums.

I had the great fortune to meet Kim Duk Soo and attend his lectures at the Puye School, which outlined the history and importance of continuing to educate and develop this almost lost tradition of farmer's music.

During Japanese occupation and for several years after, Nong-ak music and much of Korea's traditional percussion and dance was in decline and no longer actively performed. Cultural emphasis shifted to economic and industrial development and as a large percentage of the population converted to Christianity Nong-ak was viewed as an outdated activity.

#### 4.6 KIM DUK SOO'S VISION - SAMULNORI GROUP

(SamulNori literally means - the playing of four things)

In 1978 a group of four men called SamulNori changed almost overnight the common perception and place of Farmer's music.

By presenting PungMul in an indoor theatre, as well as presenting rhythms from different regions of Korea in one dynamic concert piece, the people of Korea were able to view an ancient tradition in a completely new context. This innovative approach and presentation led to what is now referred to as the SamulNori phenomena!

The word SamulNori has since become synonymous with Nong-ak or PungMul music, and in fact it is now rare to hear people refer to this style as Nong-ak as most players and audience members view it as SamulNori music, regardless of the group performing it.

The aim and function of the SamulNori group was to revive, promote and re-build the traditional drum-dance repertoire of the Nong-ak, as well as encourage new repertoire based around the traditional forms.

There are now literally hundreds of SamulNori groups throughout Korea, from social, amateur to professional. The instruments are used and taught in most pre-schools and in the last 10 years institutions dedicated to training people in the traditional performing arts as practitioners and teachers have been established.

Kim Duk Soo and his Hanullim organization have been instrumental in advising and setting up the Puye SamulNori School of Drumming, the Conservatorium of Traditional Performing Arts in Seoul and the National Centre for the Traditional Korean Performing Arts.

It's not surprising with all of his efforts and achievements that Kim Duk Soo is described as a living National Treasure and is considered an Ambassador to the Arts of Korea.

Now in his 50's he continues to tour 9 months of the year, performing, promoting and teaching worldwide. His vision and focus is to see SamulNori

percussion music as widely recognised, celebrated and performed, as the drum traditions of Cuba, Brazil and Africa!

#### **4.7 AN EVOLVING TRADITION**

The openness, and emphasis Kim Duk Soo and in turn Korean traditional musicians have placed on cross-cultural collaborations and research with musicians from diverse backgrounds has become key to ensuring its continued promotion and growth, both locally and internationally. This has resulted in exciting collaborations and recordings with master musicians from various musical genres around the globe. Kim Duk Soo is a true innovator and has clearly recognised the importance of maintaining a tradition by emphasising it as an important foundation of a traditional percussionists skill base. At the same time he has encouraged a natural evolution to take place as emerging artists begin to build and create their original works based on their traditional training.

### **5 - Future Activities - Melbourne and Tasmania**

I am currently planning the following activities to begin in late 2004 and 2005.

#### **Pulse Workshops - A teaching method in progress**

The first Pulse workshop has been programmed for November 2004 in Hobart, and will be the beginnings of developing an approach to the teaching of rhythm using methods and rhythms taught in Korea.

Adults and children alike are drawn to rhythm and in my 14 years of drum teaching, I have primarily instructed drumming classes with participants seated and with some stepping activities.

Since my return I will be shifting my focus completely to teaching rhythms while people are continually in step and moving throughout the session. This exploration will utilise my Ta Ke Ti Na rhythm work as well as exercises and methods learned in Korea.

Classes will focus on movement, vocalisation, and breath.

For younger age groups, game elements and dance-movement pieces will be devised using small handheld percussion and voice.

#### **Jazz and Korean Percussion Ensemble 2005**

An Australian - Korean inspired, Jazz and world music ensemble.

Featuring, original works and using Korean percussion instruments and traditional Korean rhythms.

#### **Development of an Australian/Korean SamulNori Percussion team**

Skill sharing and exchange with the Australian/Korean Community.

To encourage and provide a link with musicians and members of the Korean community in Australia and the Puyeo SamulNori School in Korea.

It is envisioned that eventually this will establish a team of teachers, and young masters who will continue this work here as Australians and Korean/Australians.

### **6 - Recommendations**

#### **Primary Music Education in Primary Schools**

My time in Korea reinforced the need for more emphasis on music and movement in my teaching, as I was continually inspired to see young people engage in sophisticated rhythm and movement/dance activities.

I witnessed extraordinary skills in terms of young people being able to co-ordinate their hands, commit to memory long complex rhythmic and movement passages, as well as work in an ensemble of mixed ages.

My observations of Korean music and rhythm education inspired me to look at this area more deeply and in particular at primary school music education in Australia and my own teaching practice.

Rhythm, music and movement develop much more than musicality, creativity and play.

In terms of 'charging the brain' as well as the development of left and right brain activity, sound and movement play a crucial role in a child's development and general well being. Rhythm and movement can be just a 'fun' activity, and it could be argued that for children, simply contacting a drum and playing all out is better than no contact at all, and this certainly has its value. But we tend to solely measure a learning process by how much fun a child has or how well they perform a task or play an instrument. It is common to hear people who teach music to primary school children, 'As long as they are having fun they are learning'. I generally agree with this statement, but is this enough, and do we understand in depth what rhythm and movement education can provide, cognitively and socially.

I believe there are more sophisticated ways of engaging children in rhythm and movement, which would develop their broader skills and learning processes in all subject areas. By using the voice, moving the body and encouraging visualisation, rhythm and music learning can greatly enrich a child's development for life. There is much research to indicate the importance and benefits of music, rhythm and movement and how it impacts on the body and the brain particularly as a combined activity, yet it is surprising how little of this scientific evidence is referred to and reflected in our teaching of teachers and our primary education system. In many Australian primary schools, teachers as generalists are often expected to teach music and express concern to do with their limited skills and knowledge in this specialist area, as not all are necessarily trained in music. Unfortunately music programs are also often seen as an extra-curricular activity dependant on available funds, and when cuts occur they are the first programmes to be minimised. Most surprisingly there is not a standard method or curriculum for the teaching of music in primary schools, as there is in Mathematics or English for example, although there are many schools which highlight their arts activities and music programmes as an important and featured activity.

I believe there is a need for a standardised method and approach to teaching music that is appropriate to Australian children and which recognises the deeper effects and long-term benefits of engaging in music and movement activities. Music learning should be a subject linked to all subject areas and as equally important as English and Math. (*I am referring here to a group learning activity as opposed to instrument instruction, or concert bands, which I would view as separate music activities. Group music and movement would engage all students and not be dependant on a child specialising, selecting an instrument or looking to develop a career in music.*)

It is also extremely important that our teachers feel equipped and prepared to use the combined activities of movement music and voice, and to understand in depth, *How, What* and *Why*, a young person learns when engaging in rhythm based learning tasks. How does the brain activate during these tasks and how these activities can benefit a child's learning in all subject areas. A well devised and researched curriculum which recognises the value of music education and which utilises vital information to do with existing research on learning through sound and with the body, could lead to one of the most sophisticated, holistic and exciting music programmes for children in this country and perhaps the world. It would be a strong recommendation to support a program, which works toward developing such a music curriculum. A curriculum that has a broader developmental context, and is seen as valuable in providing young people with important tools for their continued education, work life and social life.

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My time in Korea was inspirational on so many levels as both an educator and a musician.

I felt extremely privileged to be the first Australian at the Puyeo School and look forward to ongoing visits with Australian and Korean-Australian percussion colleagues in the future. The quality of teaching and musicianship was astounding and the inspiration it provided for me as a teacher and player will no doubt impact on my work for years to come. I plan to continue my training in Korea over many years, maintain important relationships with my teachers and new friends, with future plans for music collaborations both in Australia and Korea.

Tania Bosak