

THE SOUND OF KOREA
TWENTY-FIRST-CENTURY KOREAN CHORAL MUSIC

by

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A MANUSCRIPT

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Musical Arts
in the Department of Music
in the Graduate School of
The University of Alabama

TUSCALOOSA, ALABAMA

2021

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ABSTRACT

South Korea has seventy professional choirs and is one of the leading choral music communities in Asia and around the world. Korean choral compositions are frequently performed by foreign choirs. This manuscript includes an overview of various types of Korean choral music and notable Korean composers to non-native conductors. It begins with a brief chronology of Korean choral music and highlights eleven popular contemporary Korean composers and their music. The works detailed in this manuscript are each included in a new professionally recorded album entitled *The Sound of Korea (21st Century Korean Choral Music)* featuring the Seoul Vocal Artists. They are discussed in the order in which they are recorded on the album, which is organized according to the following themes: Poetry Settings, Church Anthems, Elements of Jazz, and Elements of Traditional Korean Music. Korean composers often ensure that the meaning of texts is intricately connected to their musical settings. The Korean poetry settings included on this album typify how music and poetry both have repetitions for emphasis, as well as similarities in structures, rhythms, dynamics, and tempo. Church anthems as a genre began with the arrival of Western missionaries in the 1880s. Today they remain an important genre of Korean choral music and often share similar characteristics, including a prelude, an interlude, and frequent use of a main melody. Many Korean choral composers studied at music institutions known for their jazz studies, which inspired those composers to infuse jazz harmonies and scat singing in their compositions. Finally, many composers include elements of traditional Korean folk music in their contemporary works. Composers use various elements like folk song melodies, traditional rhythms, singing styles, and modes. By providing a brief analysis of these eleven contemporary Korean choral

compositions, this manuscript might help non-Korean conductors recognize various styles of Korean choral music and assist them in their preparations for performing these and other Korean choral works.

DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this manuscript to my parents and sister, Chan-Seok Lee, Mi-Sook Yang, and Hyerim Lee who always love and support me.

I also want to dedicate this document to my Almighty Lord our God. Soli Deo Gloria!

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First, I would like to express my appreciation to Dr. Andrew Minear, who always supports me and guides me through my doctoral studies. Immeasurable gratitude also goes to all my committee members for their help and support with feedback and instruction: Dr. Amir Zaheri, Dr. Susan Williams, Dr. Eric Yates, Dr. Christy Adams, and Dr. Mina Kim. Also huge appreciation goes to the composers who allowed me to make an album with their music: Min-Hyeong Lee, Nam-Gyu Jung, Hye-Young Cho, Hyo-Won Woo, Yong-Ju Lee, Kyung-Suk Jeon, Kee-Young Kim, Byung-Hee Oh, Bum-Joon Lee, and Shin-Woong Kim.

CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....	ii
DEDICATION	iv
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	v
LIST OF FIGURES	viii
INTRODUCTION	1
CHRONOLOGY OF KOREAN CHORAL MUSIC.....	2
POETRY SETTINGS	4
Cho-Hon.....	5
Oh! Music!.....	7
Soe-Si.....	9
Till The Day.....	12
CHURCH ANTHEMS.....	15
The Eight Beatitudes.....	17
Now I Understand His Great Love	19
ELEMENTS OF JAZZ IN KOREAN CHORAL MUSIC	22
At the South Village Over the Mountain	23
Agnus Dei From Missa Brevis.....	24

ELEMENTS OF TRADITIONAL FOLK SONGS IN KOREAN CHORAL MUSIC	26
Ri From Oh! Korea.....	27
Requiem for the Comfort Women.....	29
Aoe-Rang	31
CONCLUSION.....	34
APPENDIX COMPOSER BIOGRAPHIES.....	36
REFERENCES	39

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1 - <i>Cho-Hon</i> (mm. 1-4, Tenor and Bass).....	6
Figure 2 - <i>Cho-Hon</i> (mm. 25-28).....	7
Figure 3 - <i>Oh! Music!</i> (mm. 37-42).....	9
Figure 4 - <i>Seo-Si</i> (mm. 1-4).....	10
Figure 5 - <i>Seo-Si</i> (mm. 20-24).....	10
Figure 6 - <i>Seo-Si</i> (mm. 40-42).....	11
Figure 7 - <i>Seo-Si</i> (measure 48).....	11
Figure 8 - <i>Till the Day</i> (mm. 14-17).....	13
Figure 9 - <i>Till the Day</i> (mm. 23-27).....	13
Figure 10 - <i>The Eight Beatitudes</i> (mm. 1-4).....	18
Figure 11 - <i>The Eight Beatitudes</i> (mm. 53-56).....	19
Figure 12 - <i>The Eight Beatitudes</i> (mm. 77-80).....	19
Figure 13 - <i>Now I Understand His Great Love</i> (mm. 8-30, female parts).....	20
Figure 14 - <i>Now I Understand His Great Love</i> (mm. 46-50).....	21
Figure 15 - <i>At the South Village Over the Mountain</i> (mm. 1-2).....	24

Figure 16 - <i>Agnus Dei</i> (mm. 1-3).....	25
Figure 17 - <i>Tae-geuk-gi</i>	27
Figure 18 - <i>Ri</i> (mm. 71-74).....	28
Figure 19 - <i>Ri</i> (mm. 13-16).....	29
Figure 20 - <i>Requiem for Comfort Women</i> (mm. 9-12).....	30
Figure 21 - <i>Requiem for Comfort Women</i> (mm. 101-104).....	31
Figure 22 - <i>Aoe-Rang</i> (mm. 23-27).....	33

INTRODUCTION

One of the pleasures of choral music is that we can sing a variety of music from many different cultures. Just a few decades ago, choral programming focused mainly on Western music; however, now choral performances often include music of various cultures.¹ More recently, American Choral Directors Association National Conferences and World Symposiums on Choral Music have introduced a variety of repertoire from different cultures. The choral music of South Korea is among those now featured frequently on the international stage. After the Korean War (1950-1953), choral music flourished in South Korea. Cities, universities, corporations, and churches began creating new choral ensembles, and a new generation of composers arose to fulfill this increasing demand for choral music. Although Korean choral music has a short history, South Korea today has 70 professional choirs and is one of the leading choral music communities in Asia, as well as around the world. This manuscript provides a brief chronology of Korean choral music and highlights eleven popular contemporary Korean composers and their music. The works detailed in this manuscript are each included in a new professionally recorded album entitled *The Sound of Korea (21st Century Korean Choral Music)*, featuring the Seoul Vocal Artists. They are discussed in the order in which they are recorded on the album, which is organized according to the following themes: Poetry Settings, Church Anthems, Elements of Jazz, and Elements of Traditional Korean Music.

¹ Marvin E Latimer, *Excellence in Choral Music: a History of the American Choral Directors Association* (Glendale: Hinshaw Music, 2019), 187-190.

CHRONOLOGY OF KOREAN CHORAL MUSIC

The history of Korean choral music began with the introduction of Christianity to Korea.² In the 1880s, missionaries from the United States established educational institutions in Korea. A Methodist missionary, Henry Gerhard Appenzeller, founded the Bajae Academy in 1886, and Mary F. Scranton established the Ewha Academy in the same year. Horace Grant Underwood established the Kyungshin School, and A. J. Allers set up the Chongsin Girl's School in 1887.³ In these schools, missionaries introduced music education that focused on singing with hymn tunes and folk songs.⁴ Along with these educational enterprises, Shap Alice Hamond founded and led the Ewha Choir, the first Korean treble choir, in 1909.⁵ Following the Ewha Choir, the Bajae Choir and the YMCA Choir were organized around 1910.⁶ In 1918, Yonhee College set up a collegiate choir and other colleges soon followed by establishing their own collegiate chorales.⁷ In 1937, the first private amateur choir, the Kyonggi Choir, was organized and regularly performed for the public.⁸

² In-Gi Min, "The Development of Korean Choral Music" (DMA diss., University of Southern California, 2001), 5.

³ Jong-tae Lee, *Hankuk-Kvohoi-Eumaksa* (Seoul: Ye-ChanSa, 1991), 23.

⁴ Chun-Kee Park, *Kidokgvo-Kvovuk* (Seoul: Taehan-Kidokkyo-KyoyukHyuhopi, 1992), 375.

⁵ Min, 10.

⁶ Yoo-Sun Lee, *Ki-Dok-Kvo-Eum-Ak-sa* (Seoul: Ki-Dok-Gyo-MunSa, 1988), 170.

⁷ Min, 10.

⁸ Jin-hee Won, *History of Church Music* (Seoul: Ki-Dok-Gyo-Eum-Ak-Sa, 1994), 132.

From the 1950s to the 1970s, important church musicians Tae-Joon Park, Woon-Young Nah, Jae-Hoon Park, Sang-Woo Kwak, Soo-Chol Chang, Dong-Hoon Lee, and Doo-Wan Kim developed various choral foundations, which supported mostly amateur and children's choirs in Korea.⁹ In 1960, a Christian humanitarian organization, World Vision International, started one of the most famous children's choirs of Korea, the World Vision Children's Choir. Finally, in 1973, Young-Soo Na established the National Chorus of Korea, the first professional choir in the country. Inspired by the National Chorus, many cities and district governments started their own professional choir. By 2020 South Korea was home to 70 professional choirs.

Signifying the leading role that the South Korean choral community began to play on the world stage, the International Federation of Choral Music selected Seoul, South Korea to host the Tenth World Symposium on Choral Music in 2014. In the first two decades of the 21st century, many choirs and conductors from South Korea were invited to important choral festivals and conferences. Notably, the American Choral Directors Association invited the Incheon City Chorale (2009) and the Ansan City Chorus (2015, 2019) to perform at its prestigious National Conference. In just over one century, South Korea went from having very little choral music at all to becoming one of the leading choral music communities both in Asia and around the world.

⁹ Min, 16.

POETRY SETTINGS

*How can he lead men, through persuading them?
You can't, if you can't feel it, if it never
Rises from the soul, and sways
The heart of every single hearer,
With deepest power, in simple ways.*

- Johann Wolfgang von Goethe¹⁰

Like historical European choral music, Korean choral music also has a strong relationship between poetry and music. Poetry and choral music have long been closely related. For example, during the Renaissance, Italian composers set poetry in innovative ways to express the meaning of the words (e.g. text painting). This relationship continued into the Baroque period. *Musica Poetica* was a central Baroque aesthetic that emphasized the text's rhetorical usages. Johann Mattheson (1681-1764) said, "To understand and perform with right interpretation, we must make every effort to possess the rhetorical concept."¹¹ Hans-Heinrich Unger also introduced the concept of homogeneity between music and poetry.¹² Unger mentioned nine similarities, several of which pertain to the music discussed in this manuscript. Music and poetry both have repetitions for emphasis, as well as similarities in structures, rhythms, dynamics, and tempo.

¹⁰ English Translation of *Faust*, accessed Oct 31, 2020, <https://www.poetryintranslation.com/PITBR/German/FaustI/ScenesItoIII.php>.

¹¹ Johann Mattheson, Translation from *Der Vollkommene Capellmeister*. (Berea: Riemenschneider Bach Institute, 1971), 380.

¹² Hans-Heinrich Unger, *Die Beziehungen Zwischen Musik Und Rhetorik Im 16* (Würzburg: Georg Olms, 2009), 18-20.

With this homogeneity, Korean composers often ensure that the meaning of texts are intricately connected to their musical setting. The album, *The Sound of Korea (21st Century Korean Choral Music)*, features four settings of poetry: *Cho-Hon* by Hye-Young Cho, *Oh! Music!* by Hyun-Chul Lee, *Till the Day* by Min-Hyeong Lee, and *Soe-Si* by Young-Ju Lee. The descriptions of these works below detail many of the ways that the composers' musical choices of form, texture, harmony, dynamics, and text painting reflect the meaning of the poetic texts.

Cho-Hon

Hye-Young Cho wrote *Cho-Hon* for the National Chorus of Korea in 2010. So-Wol Kim, one of Korea's most famous poets, wrote the words in 1925. "Cho-Hon" means the invocation of the dead. The poetry describes the pain of losing a loved one. This pain is experienced initially at the individual level and gradually expands to the group level.¹³ The poem features five stanzas with four lines per stanza.

O shattered name!
O name parted from me in mid-air!
O name without owner!
O name I'll call until I die!

The words left in my heart,
In the end, I wasn't able to utter all.
O you whom I loved!
O you whom I loved!

The red sun is hanging from the western summit.
The herd of deer also cry sadly.
Atop the mountain that has fallen off to the side,
I call your name.

I call your name til I can't bear the grief of it.
I call your name til I can't bear the grief of it.

¹³ Wang-Yong Yang, *Encyclopedia of Korean Culture*, vol.2. (Seongnam: The Academy of Korean Studies, 2017), accessed Feb 1, 2021, <https://encykorea.aks.ac.kr/Contents/Item/E0057085>.

The sound of my call sweeps forward but
sky and earth are too far apart.

Though I turn to stone standing here
O name I'll call until I die!
O you whom I loved!
O you whom I loved!¹⁴

Mirroring the group of five stanzas, the formal structure of this piece consists of five distinct sections. The composer uses the key of F minor to depict the pain of loss. The opening chant-like melodies of the tenor and bass parts express painful emotions well. Cho's use of fermatas and a rest enhance the emotion of the musical setting (Figure 1).

Figure 1 - *Cho-Hon* (mm. 1-4, Tenor and Bass, “O shattered name! O name parted from me in mid-air!”):

Tenor

산산이부서진 이름 - 허공중에 헤어진 이름 - 불리

Bass

산산이부서진 이름 - 허공중에 헤어진 이름 - 불리

In the second stanza, she uses repetitive antiphonal textures between the high and low voices to illustrate the gradually expanding emotions (Figure 2). Also, in mm. 23 and 24, the diminished seventh chord highlights sadness. Finally, in m. 39 the music erupts with emotion (“O you whom I loved!”) with an E-flat Major (dominant chord of the relative major key), added 9th, and a *fortissimo* dynamic marking. In contrast to the preceding antiphonal passage,

¹⁴ English Translation of *Cho-Hon*, accessed Oct 31, 2020, <https://cardiacslaves.wordpress.com>.

the homophonic texture here adds to the emotional power of this musical moment as all the voices join together and again exclaim, “O you whom I loved!”

Figure 2 - *Cho-Hon* (mm. 25-28, voices, “The words left in my heart, In the end”):

The image shows a musical score for four staves. The top two staves are vocal parts with lyrics in Korean: '한 마디 - 는 끝 끝 내 마 지 하 지'. The bottom two staves are humming parts, marked 'Hm'. The score includes dynamics such as *mp* and *cresc.*. Two red circles highlight specific musical phrases in the vocal lines.

In m. 41, Cho uses choral humming with long sustained notes to illustrate the text of the 3rd stanza: “The red sun is hanging from the western summit.” From mm. 56 to 77, the composer uses similar antiphonal textures to those in the second stanza to highlight the grief in stanza 4. After the second climax, she uses longer note durations while gradually thinning the texture and decreasing dynamics. In mm. 81 to 83, other features essential to text painting include the use of a simple homophonic texture and return to F minor to represent the text “Though I turn to stone standing here.”

Oh! Music!

Another example of the symbiosis of poetry and music in Korean choral music is Hyun-Chul Lee’s *Oh! Music!* Lee composed *Oh! Music!* in 2018 for the 30th anniversary of the Wonju Civic Chorus. For this piece, Lee adopted texts from Arthur O’Shaughnessy’s *Ode*.

The composer directly used the original text and then added two words (“Oh music!”), which he also used for the title of the work. He structures the piece in ternary form with a coda (A B A' Coda). This form corresponds to the first and second stanzas of the poem with the first stanza returning for the A' section. In this piece, Lee employs a simple piano accompaniment with mostly homophonic textures.

We are the music makers,
And we are the dreamers of dreams,
Wandering by lone sea-breakers,
And sitting by desolate streams;
World-losers and world-forsakers,
On whom the pale moon gleams:
Yet we are the movers and shakers
Of the world forever, it seems.

With wonderful deathless ditties
We build up the world's great cities,
And out of a fabulous story
We fashion an empire's glory:
Our souls with high music ringing:
O men! it must ever be
That we dwell, in our dreaming and singing,
A little apart from ye.¹⁵

Lee's simple piano accompaniment mostly consists of the left hand's arpeggiated chords juxtaposed with the right hand's block chord style (Figure 3). Also, the score includes many instances of text painting. In mm. 23 to 24 for example, Lee uses only soprano and alto parts with the text, “wandering by lone.” Following m. 26, he uses syncopation for “sea-breakers.” In m. 32, he uses the soprano's held note to represent the word “sitting.” For the text “on whom the pale moon gleams” in mm. 37 to 39, Lee uses an ascending line in the soprano part as if to depict a moon beam (Figure 3).

¹⁵ Arthur William Edgar O'Shaughnessy, *Music and Moonlight: Poems and Songs* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1874), 1-5.

Figure 3 - *Oh! Music!* (mm. 37-42, “On whom the pale moon gleams. Oh! Music”):

The image shows a musical score for three parts: S.A. (Soprano Alto), T.B. (Tenor Bass), and Pno. (Piano). The score is in G major (one flat) and 4/4 time. The lyrics are in Korean: "창백한 달빛 한 줄기 오, 음악이여, 오, 음악이여, 오, 음악". The S.A. part has a long note on the word "오" circled in red. The Pno. part has two chords in the right hand circled in red, and the bass line in the left hand is circled in red.

Soe-Si

The next example of the symbiosis of poetry and music in Korean choral music is *Soe-Si* by Yong-Ju Lee. In 2012, Lee composed *Soe-Si* based on a DongJu Yun poem written in 1941 while Korea was annexed by Japan.¹⁶ In this poem, Yun tried to describe the desperate and gloomy time of annexation. Yong-Ju Lee built this piece with three main sections. Evoking the dark mood, he opens with nine measures of slow half notes and whole notes in the piano. This piano prelude starts with only one note, and gradually emerges with added dissonances as additional pitches join each restatement of the building chord (Figure 6). In mm. 14 and 21 of the A section (mm. 1 to 26), the composer employs eighth rests to reflect the poem's agonizing atmosphere (Figure 7). In the C section (from m. 40), he uses

¹⁶ ChiSung Kim, “A study on Yoon Dong-ju’s Poem – Based on the Christianity in Bukgando” (PhD diss., Hanyang University, 2016), 114.

various tools to describe the wind touching the stars: an arpeggio in the piano part (Figure 8) and triplets for tenor and bass parts (Figure 9).

Figure 4 - *Seo-Si* (mm. 1-4):

Musical score for measures 1-4 of *Seo-Si*. The score is in 4/4 time and B-flat major. It features three staves: Soprano, Baritone, and Piano. The tempo and mood are indicated as "76-80 순수한 느낌으로" (76-80 pure feeling). The Soprano and Baritone parts are mostly rests. The Piano part begins with a *ppp* dynamic, followed by a *pp* dynamic in the final measure. The piano part includes an arpeggiated chord in the final measure.

Figure 5 - *Seo-Si* (mm. 20-24, I was tormented.):

Musical score for measures 20-24 of *Seo-Si*. The score is in 4/4 time and B-flat major. It features three staves: Soprano, Baritone, and Piano. The lyrics are "에 도 나 는 괴 로 위 험 다" (I was tormented). The dynamics are marked as *mp*, *p*, *mf*, and *mp*. A red circle highlights the vocal melody in measures 21-22. The piano part features a complex harmonic structure with multiple chords and a crescendo leading to a *mf* dynamic.

Figure 6 - *Seo-Si* (mm. 40-42, “Tonight also the stars are touched by the wind”):

The musical score for Figure 6 consists of three systems. The first system shows measures 40-42 with piano accompaniment in the upper register, marked with dynamics *p* and *mp*. The second system shows the vocal line with lyrics in Korean: "오 - 리 - 람 - 이 - 밤 - 에 - 도 - 오 - 리 - 람 - 밤". The third system shows the piano accompaniment in the lower register, featuring a complex sixteenth-note passage in the right hand that is circled in red. The piano part includes fingerings such as 6 and 3.

Figure 7 - *Seo-Si* (measure 48, male voices, “Tonight also the stars are touched by the wind”):

The musical score for Figure 7 shows measure 48. It includes a vocal line for male voices with lyrics "별 - 이 - 바 - 람 -". The vocal line has a red oval highlighting a triplet of notes. The piano accompaniment is in the lower register, marked with dynamics *p*, and features sixteenth-note passages with fingerings such as 6 and 3.

Till the Day

The final example of the relationship of poetry and music is Min-Hyeong Lee's *Till the Day*. The Cardinal Singers of the University of Louisville (Kent Hatteberg, conductor) commissioned Lee's *Till the Day* in 2019. Lee composed this music using the same poem as Yong-Ju Lee's *Soe-Si*, and Lee illustrates Korean people's sadness with an a cappella setting in eight voice parts. The composer made his own English translation of the poetry:

Till the day I die,
May I have no shame under the heavens,

Even from the wind rustling a leaf
I was tormented.

Singing of the stars
I'll love all that are dying.
And shall walk the path given to me.

Tonight also the stars are touched by the wind.

Min-Hyeong Lee organizes the piece in three contrasting sections plus a coda (A B C coda) and uses the tenor part importantly for both the opening and the ending to unify the whole piece. Each section corresponds to one of the four main stanzas of the poem. The piece opens in a polyphonic style using the tenor part as the chord's foundation while soprano and alto voices introduce the main theme. He begins with a simple D-flat major chord and then moves on to use lots of clusters and dissonances, like the diminished chord in m. 15. These dissonances reflect the gloomy mood of the Korean people during the time of Japanese annexation (Figure 4).

After a highly chromatic section, Lee employs a variety of text painting techniques starting in m. 22. To illustrate the word "wind," Lee chooses perfect fifth leaps for the soprano parts with the bass part's drone-like foundation. Also, there is a breathing sound

altos in m. 55, and, finally, all voices together in m. 57 with the main melody to give an assertive feeling when the text is “And shall walk the path given to me.” In m. 71, there is a short quick disappearing speaking voice as the “stars are touched by the wind.”

CHURCH ANTHEMS

The next two pieces on the album exemplify another common category of contemporary Korean choral music: church anthems. The first era of Korean church music (1802 to 1908) consisted primarily of hymns introduced by missionaries. Methodist missionary Herber Jones published *Cahn-mi-ka*, the first Korean hymnal, in 1802.¹⁷ Two years later, Underwood published the first Presbyterian hymnal, *Chan-yang-ka*.¹⁸ Both hymnals consisted mainly of American and English hymns with Korean translations. Use of foreign hymns continued throughout the 19th and early 20th centuries. Eventually, on September 15, 1905, the Presbyterian and Methodist Mission made an agreement and published the first unified hymnal, *Chan-song-ka* in 1908.¹⁹ Hymns in *Chan-song-ka* became central to the contemporary unified hymnal.

The first generation of sanctuary choirs began to engage audiences in service in the Jang-Dae-Hyun church in Pyeongyang in 1901. The Sae-moon-an church, Chong-kyo church, and Chung-dong church's sanctuary choirs were founded in 1910. American church anthems arrived in Korea in the 1930's, and these anthems became the foundation of Korean anthem composition. In 1937, Whal-Yong Cho published the first collection of anthems with two hundred pieces in Pyeongyang.²⁰ Many of them are still performed in Korean churches

¹⁷ Geum-Suk Son, "Korean Church Music: Power, Colonialism and Resistance" (PhD diss., Michigan State University, 2000), 67.

¹⁸ Son, "Korean Church Music," 68.

¹⁹ Son, "Korean Church Music," 73.

²⁰ Jung-Soo Hong, "Korean Church Music's History, Now, and Future" *Yonsei University Music Theory Forum* 6, no. 0 (1999): 269.

The main characteristics of these works include a short prelude, an interlude, numerous hymn arrangements, and frequent use of the main melody.²¹ Around the 1940s, thanks to leading composers Jae-Hoon Park and Soo-Cheol Chang, the number of church anthems increased rapidly. Park and Chang cooperated and published collections, *Chan-Mi*, in 1947, 1949, 1951, and 1954. After the Korean War (1953), church choirs in South Korea flourished.²² From 1950 to 1980, Korean church music composition was dominated by three composers: Jae-Hoon Park, Doo-Wan Kim, and Woon Young Na. Na used more Korean traditional rhythms and melodies such as pentatonic scales while Park preferred Western harmonic language and Kim composed music considered by some to be more accessible and practical for church choirs.²³

Building on the history of Korean anthems, many Korean anthems are published today with leading presses like the Joongangart, the Jubilate Press, and the Chorus Center. The album, *The Sound of Korea (21st Century Korean Choral Music)*, includes two church anthems: Shin-Woong Kim's *The Eight Beatitudes*, and *Now I Understand His Great Love* by Kee-Young Kim. These pieces exemplify the most prominent characteristics of Korean church anthems, including the use of preludes, interludes, simple melodies, and homophony.

²¹ Hong, "Korean Church Music's History," 22-23.

²² Anna Kim, "A Study on the Direction of 21st Century's Korean Church Music", (Master's Thesis., Yonsei University, 2000), 8.

²³ Keunah Kim, "A Study on the Work Propensity of the Korean Composers to Worship Music", (Master's Thesis, Korean National University of Education, 2004), 14.

The Eight Beatitudes

The first church anthem on the album is Shin-Woong Kim's *The Eight Beatitudes*, composed in 2016 with a text based on Matthew 5:3-12 (NIV).

- ³ Blessed are the poor in spirit,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
- ⁴ Blessed are those who mourn,
for they will be comforted.
- ⁵ Blessed are the meek,
for they will inherit the earth.
- ⁶ Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness,
for they will be filled.
- ⁷ Blessed are the merciful,
for they will be shown mercy.
- ⁸ Blessed are the pure in heart,
for they will see God.
- ⁹ Blessed are the peacemakers,
for they will be called children of God.
- ¹⁰ Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
- ¹¹ Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil
against you because of me.
- ¹² Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they
persecuted the prophets who were before you.

Kim composed this piece with four main sections and a coda (A B C D Coda). The first section (mm. 1 to 20) sets verses 3 and 4. He starts this piece with a short prelude of two measures. In the accompaniment's left hand, Kim uses the pitch C1 as a pedal tone. This extremely low range illustrates the lowly status of the "poor" (Figure 10). In contrast, when the text proceeds to "Blessed," he uses upper range to describe the meaning of the word. This sequence repeats at mm. 11 to 18. In addition to using pedal tones, Kim builds this piece with sentences. For example, a sentential pattern is established when the opening theme from mm. 3 to 4 is repeated in mm. 5 to 6 without a cadence. A continuation in mm. 7 to 10 follows this presentation to a half cadence in m. 10.

Figure 10 - *The Eight Beatitudes* (mm. 1-4, “Blessed are the poor in spirit”):

The image shows a musical score for the first four measures of 'The Eight Beatitudes'. It consists of three staves: a vocal line in treble clef, a vocal line in bass clef, and a piano accompaniment in bass clef. The tempo is marked 'Andantino espressivo' with a quarter note equal to approximately 74 beats per minute. The key signature has one flat (B-flat major or D minor). The vocal lines begin with the Korean text '심령이 가난한 자는' (The poor in spirit). The piano accompaniment features a steady eighth-note pattern in the right hand and a more complex bass line in the left hand. Four specific notes in the piano left hand are circled in red: the first notes of measures 1, 2, 3, and 4, which are G2, F2, E2, and D2 respectively.

For the B section (mm. 21 to 53) verses 5 to 9, Kim maintains the sentence (presentation and continuation) structure. The 10th verse corresponds to the C section (mm. 54 to 67) where changes to a faster tempo and use of a descending chromatic line and harmonic changes (Ab – Eb - Gb) portray persecution. (Figure 11). For the last section to the coda (mm. 68 to 90), Kim uses fanfare-like rhythms and ascending phrases to describes the text, “Rejoice and be glad” (Figure 12).

Figure 11 - *The Eight Beatitudes* (mm. 53-56, “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness”):

53 **G** *Piu mosso* (♩ = c. 112)
mf
 의 — 를 위 하여 박 해 를
mf
 53 *Piu mosso* (♩ = c. 112)
mf

Figure 12 - *The Eight Beatitudes* (mm. 77-80, “Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven”):

77
 상 — 이 큼 이 라 기 뻐 하 라 즐 거 워 하 라 하 늘 의
 77

Now I Understand His Great Love

The next example of the Korean church anthem style is Kee-Young Kim’s *Now I Understand His Great Love*. Kim wrote this piece and the text in 2010.

Now I understand His Love
 I now understand the Love of God
 Now I understand His Love
 That Secret in the quietness
 Now I understand His Love
 I will no longer deny it
 His Love freed us from the despair and the darkness

Now I understand His Love
 Glory, Hallelujah to the Lord of the Cross
 He came to save you and me
 Glory, Hallelujah to the Lord of the Cross
 He is risen
 And He is with us all the time
 He has given relief to me
 I now live a total new life
 Defeating the evil, He has given us the salvation
 I want to pray for His Love
 He has forgiven our sins and freed us from them
 Now I understand His Love
 I now understand the Love of God
 Now I understand how great His Love is!²⁴

The structure of *Now I Understand His Great Love* is A B A' Coda, and the key is A major. Basically, Kim used four-measure phrases throughout the piece. Sopranos and altos sing the first statement of the theme (Figure 13). Tenor and bass voices then enter as the melody repeats antiphonally in mm. 15 and 29. The B section begins at m. 49 with a modulation to C major. While the first section's melody is generally descending in motion, Kim uses more ascending phrases for the B section. Also, the harmonic structure changes quickly: F major (m. 49), A major (m. 50), F major (m. 51), C major (m. 52), E-flat major (m. 53), G major (m. 54), Eb major (m. 55) (Figure 14). After a short bridge section (mm. 57 to 59), Kim presents the second theme of the A section, followed by the coda.

Figure 13 - *Now I Understand His Great Love* (mm. 8-30, female parts, “Now I understand His Love”):



²⁴ English Translation of *Now I Understand His Great Love*, accessed Oct 31, 2020, http://www.sarang.com/srcr_worshipteam2/3845/?lan=ko&pid=srcr_worshipteam&category=1.

Figure 14 - *Now I Understand His Great Love* (mm. 46-50, “Now I understand His Love Glory, Hallelujah to the Lord of the Cross”):

6

46 *unis.* *div. f*
 죄 용 서 하 신 그의 사 랑 나 이 제 알 았 네 십 자

46 *molto*

E 49 *marcato* *mf*
 가 의 주 께 영 광 할 뉘 부 야 그는

49 *marcato* *f* *mf*

ELEMENTS OF JAZZ

The next selections on the album *The Sound of Korea (21st Century Korean Choral Music)* represent contemporary Korean choral works influenced by jazz. Korean jazz history started in the early twentieth century when Korea was annexed by Japan.²⁵ In 1927, Nan-Pa Hong and the Kyong-Sung Symphony orchestra performed the first jazz concert.²⁶ In the late 1970s, the establishment of the jazz clubs Janus and All That Jazz brought rapid jazz developments to Korea, but those clubs were generally patronized by foreigners such as diplomats, business people, and U.S. Army personnel.²⁷ The Seoul Olympic Games in 1988 inspired interest in world music, and Korean jazz benefited and exploded in popularity.²⁸ However, in the mid-1990s, the popularity of jazz began to decline.²⁹ In contrast to the Korean mainstream, much jazz choral music, such as Bob Chilcott's *Little Jazz Mass* and Steve Dobrogosz's *Mass*, are beloved and performed frequently. In this album, Bum-Joon Lee's *At the South Village Over the Mountain* and Nam-Gyu Jung's *Agnus Dei* exemplify Korean choral music influenced by jazz.

²⁵ Hwajoon Joo, "Yoon-Seong Cho's 'Jazz Korea': A Cross-Cultural Musical Excursion" (Master's thesis., University of North Texas, 2008), 15.

²⁶ Se Jin Choi, "History of Korean Jazz", *MM Jazz* (Mar 2001): 35.

²⁷ Joo, "Yoon-Seong Cho's 'Jazz Korea'," 15.

²⁸ Joo, "Yoon-Seong Cho's 'Jazz Korea'," 16.

²⁹ Jong Wook Ha, "Suggestion for Korean Jazz in the Future", *MM Jazz* (May 2001): 37.

At the South Village Over the Mountain

Bum-Joon Lee composed this piece in 2013 after his studies at two American music schools known for their excellence in jazz studies: Berklee College of Music and University of Miami. This exposure to jazz influenced his choral writing. In this piece, he arranged a famous Korean pop song entitled *At the South Village Over the Mountain* that Dong-Hyeon Kim composed in 1965. Dong-Whan Kim wrote the text in three stanzas. Lee used only the first stanza and Lee composed this piece with an A B C structure. All sections use the same text, but Lee uses different textures.

Who lives in the south village over the mountain
So spring breeze arrives to the south year by year
The fragrance of azaleas in blossoming April
The scent of barley in wheat ripening May
Every which it carries and comes
I love it when the breeze blows from the south ³⁰

The first element of jazz is the use of vocables (nonsense syllables), which are similar to the scat singing style of American jazz. Scat singing is a vocal jazz technique whereby singers improvise melodies with nonsense syllables imitating instruments. In the first A section, Lee quotes *Over the Rainbow* by Harold Arlen with an entrance that is reminiscent of scat singing featuring various nonsense syllables like dum, du, and ru (Figure 15). In addition, the A section is mostly homophonic, a typical characteristic in vocal jazz.³¹

Another jazz element is the use of harmonies often associated with the style. As we can see in Figure 15, Lee started with a simple G major chord and added tension notes in the

³⁰ English Translation of *Now I Understand his Great Love*, accessed Oct 31, 2020, http://www.sarang.com/srcce_worshipteam2/3845/?lan=ko&pid=srcce_worshipteam&category=1.

³¹ Bruce Benward, and Marilyn Nadine Saker, *Music: In Theory and Practice*. (Boston: McGraw-Hill, 2003), 136.

piano accompaniment. In the second beat of the first measure, he uses G (add 9), and then he uses G (add 6, 9, and 11) for the second measure (Figure 15).

Figure 15 - *At the South Village Over the Mountain* (mm. 1-2):

The musical score for 'At the South Village Over the Mountain' (mm. 1-2) features five staves: Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass, and Piano. The Soprano part has lyrics 'dum dum dum dum'. The Alto and Tenor parts have lyrics 'du ru ru ru'. The Bass part has lyrics 'dum du dum du'. The Piano part is marked '(Delicately)' and 'pp'. Two red circles highlight specific chords in the piano accompaniment.

Agnus Dei from Missa Brevis

The second piece to include elements of jazz is the *Agnus Dei from Missa Brevis*, composed by Nam-Gyu Jung in 2015. Most of Jung's choral works are infused with elements of jazz. This mass is composed with the traditional Latin mass text and has another nickname, Klavier Messe (Piano Mass). In this work, the choir part features simple melodies with homophonic structures, while the piano part has more rhythmic and harmonic movement. Jung composed this piece with an A B structure. Both the A (Agnus Dei) and B (Dona Nobis) section open with unison voices: male unison for the A section, and female unison for the B section. Like Bum-Joon Lee's piece, we can find many jazz-inspired chords in this work. As

we can see from Figure 16, Jung opens with G7 chord (omit 5), as well as lots of tension chords like Db (add 11), Dsus4/E, F#b13/Bb chords.

Figure 16 - *Agnus Dei* (mm. 1-3):

G7/F C/E G/D Db11 D/C C/Bb G/A Dsus4/E D G#dim7 Em7b9 F#b13/Bb F#7/Bb

p L. H.

ELEMENTS OF TRADITIONAL KOREAN MUSIC

This final portion of this manuscript explains one of most important characteristics of contemporary Korean choral music: the use of traditional Korean music. The use of traditional elements is deeply connected to Korea's history and was brought to the forefront when Korea was annexed by Japan from 1910 to 1945. Throughout history, Koreans were “united to defend their country, and their patriotism has been a part of their national consciousness.”³² This sense of unification led to a movement of nationalism, which produced music for the purpose of enhancing independence and love for the country.³³ Many composers have been encouraged to use traditional Korean music as a basis for their compositions in order to promote nationalistic ideals.³⁴ This tradition remains an important trait of contemporary Korean choral music. For example, during the Fall 2019 Korean Choral Directors Association Conference, choirs performed thirty-nine Korean pieces, thirteen of which were based on traditional Korean elements.³⁵ Hyo-Won Woo’s *Ri*, Kyung-Sook Jeon’s *Requiem for the Comfort Women*, and Byung-Hee Oh’s *Aoe-Rang* are composed with

³² In-Soo Kim, *Protestants and the Formation of Modern Korean Nationalism, 1884-1920: A Study of the Contributions of Horace Grant Underwood and Sun Chu Kil* (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 1996), 8.

³³ Ingyu Kang, “Evolving Nationalism in Korean Music as Seen in Ahn Eak-tai’s *Korea Fantasy* and *Missa Arirang* by Huh Cool-Jae” (DMA diss., University of Alabama, 2012), 16.

³⁴ This is not unlike nationalist movements in the Western classical tradition. Composers from countries in the “periphery” (e.g. America, Bohemia, England, Finland, Norway, Russia) included musical elements from native or folk music of their countries to differentiate from the music of “normative” countries of France, Germany, and Italy.

³⁵ Dong-Kyu Lee, “A Study of ‘Jeongseon Arirang’ by Min-Hyeong Lee: Elements of Korean Traditional Folk Music” *Choral Journal* 61, no. 4 (2020): 63.

traditional foundations. For these pieces I will not only introduce Korean traditional elements, but also highlight their unique features.

Ri From Oh! Korea

Hyo-Won Woo composed *Oh! Korea* in 2002 and Hakwon Yoon and the Incheon City Chorale premiered the piece. She composed this piece in four-movements based on philosophical elements represented by the four trigrams of the South Korean flag (Tae-geuk-gi).³⁶ The flag has three parts. The white background represents peace and purity. Blue in the center represents yin and red represents yang, so these two colors represent balance and the universe.³⁷ The trigrams together represent principles of movement and harmony found in nature. Importantly, Ri (bottom left), symbolizes sun, autumn, fire, and prosperity.

A sky opens.
New day opens
Let's move forward!

Figure 17 - *Tae-geuk-gi*



Inspired by the Ri trigram, and to illustrate the energy of sun and fire, Woo used dramatic rhythms (syncopations, 3-3-2, 2-3-3 rhythms), dynamics, and D-natural pedal tones throughout the work. Another essential feature of this piece is short phrases with lots of 4th

³⁶ Hyo-Won Woo, *Oh! Korea*, (Seoul: Chorus Center, 2002), 5.

³⁷ Ministry of the Interior and Safety of Republic of Korea, accessed Feb 1, 2021, <https://www.mois.go.kr/chd/sub/a05/birth/screen.do>

relationships (Figure 18). Also, Woo uses various ascending figures like the first piano part in mm. 13 to 20, and choral melodies which start from m. 43 to describe the sunrise (Figure 19). In addition, much Korean traditional music is based on the pentatonic mode. Woo builds the melodic and harmonic structure by using D F G A C pentatonic mode. It brings out a special sonority in the music.

Figure 18 - *Ri* (mm. 71-74):

The image displays a musical score for the piece *Ri*, measures 71-74. The score is arranged in four systems. The first system consists of a vocal line and a piano accompaniment line, both of which are circled in red. The vocal line features a long, sustained note with the syllable 'ah' written below it. The piano accompaniment line shows a series of chords and a melodic line that is also circled in red. The second system shows the piano accompaniment for measures 72-74, with a dotted line indicating a continuation of the previous system. The third system shows the piano accompaniment for measures 73-74, with a red circle highlighting a specific melodic figure. The fourth system shows the piano accompaniment for measures 74-74, with a red circle highlighting a specific melodic figure. The score is written in a key signature of one flat and a time signature of 4/4.

Figure 19 - *Ri* (mm. 13-16):



Requiem for the Comfort Women

Jeon wrote this piece in 2017 to memorialize Comfort Women who were women and girls forced into being sex slaves by the Imperial Japanese Army in occupied countries and territories before and during World War II.³⁸ Jeon also wrote the text in Korean.

The day when my sister rides in a flower sedan chair to cross over Arirang pass,
I had sweet dreams, wedding makeup dream.
When falling asleep crying in this cold strange place,
I, wearing a bribe's headpiece in a flower sedan chair, are standing there smiling.
Spring is gone, winter is gone, and spring is coming again.
Even longing can't dwell in the place where I stand,
Making grave in my towering breast,
please carry me in the flower sedan chair and bury me.
When the flower blooms nearby a grave and the floral seeds flutter,
I'll be blown away by the wind heading for my hometown.
The place where my mother is, where she hovers with crying.³⁹

Jeon used a traditional Korean requiem tune from Jindo Province, *Sanyosori*, for the beginning A section and the repeated A section at the end. She also used a traditional Korean

³⁸ Erin Blakemore, "The Brutal History of Japan's Comfort Woman" accessed Oct 31, 2020, <https://www.history.com/news/comfort-women-japan-military-brothels-korea>.

³⁹ Translated by Dong-Kyu Lee.

handbell, *yoryung*, and the way to sing. In an actual funeral procession, when the procession begins, the handbell ringer sings a prologue song in front of the bier while shaking the handbell, followed by everyone singing the same melody together.⁴⁰ Mirroring this practice, Jeon started with a bass soloist, followed by unison singing of the choir (Figure 20).

In addition to the concept of the procession, Jeon used a Korean traditional folk song Arirang text in mm. 30 to 37 and mm. 111 to 124 to depict a girl who misses her hometown and family. Also, in mm. 101 to 104, she used a G6 note to depict a young girl’s crying (Figure 21).

Figure 20 - *Requiem for Comfort Women* (mm. 9-12):

(1.time;unison
2.time;시간차를 두고 시작)

mf

B.Solo
에 헤 야 에이 야 에 에

S
받기 *mf*
에 에

A
받기 *mf*
에 에

T
받기 *mf*
에 에

B
받기 *mf*
에 에

요령

⁴⁰ Oh-sung Kwon, “Melodic Structure of Korean Funeral Procession Songs” *East Asian Musics* 15, (1983): 59.

Figure 21 - *Requiem for Comfort Women* (mm. 101-104, “The place where my mother is”):

The musical score shows four vocal parts (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) and a piano accompaniment. The Soprano part begins with a circled *mp* dynamic marking. The lyrics are: "내 어머니 계신 곳 설운 울음으로 계신 곳". The piano accompaniment starts at measure 101 with a *mp* dynamic and changes to *p* later in the piece.

Aoe-Rang

The last example of choral music that incorporates traditional elements (and the final piece on the album) is *Aoe-Rang*, composed by Byung-Hee Oh in 2015. Byung-Hee Oh used a traditional Aoe-Rang melody, which is an Arirang from Hamkyungdo province. She employed various Korean traditional elements such as *Jajin Taryung Jangdan* (compound idea of meter, rhythmic pattern, tempo, and mood), and *Menaritori* (special pitch collection). The composer also includes the original folk text.

Wild grapes and Siberian gooseberries are entangled in a faraway place,
when can I meet and see my love, my love.⁴¹

In addition to traditional elements, Oh used various structures of voicing. In the beginning section, Oh opens polyphonically with a natural pedal tone. From mm. 23 to 33, while four soloists sing a repetitive, echo-like melody, the alto and tenor parts support the

⁴¹ Translated by Dong-Kyu Lee

harmonic foundation with humming (Figure 22). In the next section, Oh writes mostly homophonic textures with a soprano soloist. For the allegro section, she employs an antiphonal-like structure and returns to a homophonic texture for the ending.

Jangdan literally means long and short, and indicates a rhythmic pattern, tempo, and mood, but excludes any meaning of mathematical proportion or measure lines.⁴² However, if we put this in a Western measure system, *Jajintaryung Jandan* is similar to a 12/8 meter. We can play its three beats together as one time, and in this case one *jangdan* is the same as four times. Oh used lots of triplets to depict this.

The composer not only adapts *Jangdan* but other traditional modes as well. The characteristics of traditional modes vary region to region just as customs and dialects do. The mode *Menari Jo* is a traditional pitch collection native to the Jeongseon and Hamkyung Do regions, which did not have many cultural exchanges with other regions due to their isolated and mountainous terrain. This mode influences both the melodic and harmonic structure of the folk song. Most traditional Korean music is in pentatonic modes, but it also sometimes uses three-note, four-note, or six-note modes. It also uses two main pitch collections: *Pyongjo* (sol mode: sol-la-do-re-mi) and *Kyemyon-jo* (la mode: la-do-re-mi-sol). The modes used in folksongs are based on these two pitch collections. The melody of the traditional "Aoerang" is based on the *Menari* mode, which draws from the *Kyemyun-jo* pitch collection.⁴³

⁴² Sohyun Ham Kang, *Korean Folk Songs as Choral Music: Approaches to the Repertory For Non-Korean Musicians* (Master's thesis, California State University, Long Beach, 1999), 17.

⁴³ "Traditional Korean Key and Mode," Korea National Gugak Center, accessed Oct 19, 2020, <http://www.gugak.go.kr/site/homepage/menu/viewMenu?menuid=001003001001001004001>.

Figure 22 – Aoe-Rang, (mm. 23-27):

The musical score for 'Aoe-Rang' (measures 23-27) is presented in a multi-staff format. The vocal parts (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) are written in treble clef with lyrics in Korean. The instrumental parts (A, T, B) are written in treble and bass clefs. The score includes dynamic markings such as *mf* and *p*, and performance instructions like 'Hnm' (humming). The lyrics for the vocal parts are: '어 어', '어 어', '어 어 랑', and '어 랑'. The instrumental parts (A, T, B) feature long, sustained notes, with 'Hnm' indicating humming. The score is marked with measure numbers 23, 24, 25, 26, and 27.

CONCLUSION

When Western choral music was introduced to Korea at the end of the nineteenth century, the genre was unknown. Korean musicians adopted it and infused it with Korean poetry, church music traditions, elements of jazz, and aspects of traditional Korean music. This nurtured the explosive growth of Korean choral music and contributed to Korea's growing reputation in the world of choral music. Hye-Young Cho's *Cho-Hon*, Hyun-Chul Lee's *Oh! Music*, Hyo-Won Woo's *Ri*, Yong Ju Lee's *Soe-si*, Kyung-Suk Jeon's *Requiem for Comfort Women*, Kee-Young Kim's *Now I Understand His Great Love*, Byung-Hee Oh's *Aoe-Rang*, Bum-Joon Lee's *At the South Village Over the Mountain*, Nam-Gyu Jung's *Agnus Dei*, Min-Hyeong Lee's *Till the Day*, and Shin-Woong Kim's *The Eight Beatitudes* are not only brilliant examples of choral compositions but are also a helpful way to introduce contemporary Korean choral music to international musicians. As is evident in the fact many Korean pieces are frequently performed by many international choirs, Korean choral music can be performed by many choirs in the world.

There is a growing body of literature to guide conductors as they program and prepare choral music of South Korea. In-Gi Min's "The Development of Korean Choral Music" (2001), Jae-Song Ha's "A Conductor's Guide to Selected Sacred Choral Works Composed Between 1980 and 2005 by Korean Choral Composers" (2006)⁴⁴, Eun-Sil Kim's "A Study of Arirang and Its Influence on Contemporary Korean Choral Works" (2008)⁴⁵, and Sooyeon

⁴⁴ Jae-Song Ha, "A Conductor's Guide to Selected Sacred Choral Works Composed Between 1980 and 2005 by Korean Choral Composers" (PhD diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2006).

⁴⁵ Eun-Sil Kim, "A Study of Arirang and Its Influence on Contemporary Korean Choral Works" (DMA diss., University of Southern California, 2008).

Lee's "A Study of Korean Diction for Choral Conductors Using the Principles of the Korean Writing System" (2017)⁴⁶ each provide valuable information to foreign conductors to prepare Korean choral works. I hope this manuscript and the accompanying album also make a valuable contribution to the literature. It might help non-Korean choral conductors recognize eleven pieces apart from other choral compositions and assist them in their preparations for performing these and other Korean choral works. Recommendations for further research include in-depth studies of the works of individual composers, studies of Korean professional choirs, and studies of graduate and undergraduate choral conducting programs in South Korea. Additional studies will continue to make the remarkable body of Korean choral music more accessible to conductors and singers outside of Korea.

⁴⁶ Sooyeon Lee, "A Study of Korean Diction for Choral Conductors Using the Principles of the Korean Writing System" (DMA diss., University of Alabama, 2017).

APPENDIX: COMPOSER BIOGRAPHIES

Hye-Young Cho

Hye-Young Cho earned both undergraduate and graduate degrees in composition from Hanyang University. She received various composition awards, including those from the Korean Choral Composition Festival and the Atlanta Choral Symposium. Cho previously worked as the composer-in-residence for the National Chorus of Korea and the Ansan City Choir. She now works as the composer-in-residence for the Incheon Civic Chorus and teaches at her alma mater.

Kyung-Suk Jeon

Jeon completed her undergraduate degree at Hanyang University and got a diploma from Staatliche Hochschule für Musik und Darstellende Kunst Mannheim. She also worked as a composer-in-residence at the National Chorus of Korea.

Nam Gyu Jung

Nam Gyu Jung earned his undergraduate degree from Ganwon National University. After graduation, he moved to Vienna, Austria and studied at the Universität für Musik und darstellende Kunst Wien and Musik und Kunst privat Universtät der stadt Wien. Currently, he teaches composition and conducting in various colleges and serves as the Wonju Civic Chorus's principal conductor.

Kee-Young Kim

Kee-Young Kim completed both undergraduate and graduate degrees at Hanyang University. He also studied further at Boston University. Currently, he is serving as the music director at the First Korean Church in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Shin-Woong Kim

Shin-Woong Kim completed his undergraduate degree in composition at the Presbyterian University and Theological Seminary in Seoul and received a master's degree from the Korean National University of Arts. He then moved to Germany to finish his K.A. and Solistenexamen degrees from Staatliche Hochschule für Musik und Darstellende Kunst Stuttgart. Currently, Kim works as an Associate Professor at his undergraduate alma mater.

Bum-Joon Lee

Bum-Joon Lee received his undergraduate degree from Berklee College of Music and a graduate degree from the University of Miami. He is now a professor at Seoul Digital University.

Hyun-Chul Lee

Hyun-Chul Lee received his undergraduate degree in composition from Georgia State University and completed his graduate degree at Westminster Choir College. Currently, he is the composer-in-residence for the World Vision Choir and the Uijeongbu Civic Choir. Lee also works as an adjunct professor at the Presbyterian University and Theological Seminary in Seoul.

Min-Hyeong Lee

Min-Hyeong Lee received an undergraduate degree in composition from the Presbyterian University and Theological Seminary in Seoul. He now works as a church musician and the composer-in-residence for the Jubilate Music Alliance.

Yong-Ju Lee

Yong-Ju Lee graduated from Seoul National University with an undergraduate degree and received a post-graduate degree from Staatliche Hochschule für Musik Freiburg in Germany. Currently, he is working as an adjunct professor at Gacheon University.

Byung-Hee Oh

Byung-Hee Oh received her undergraduate and graduate degrees from Hanyang University. She works as a composer-in-residence for the National Chorus of Korea and the YoonHakwon Chorale.

Hyo-Won Woo

Woo did her undergraduate and master's degree at Sungsin Women's University. She worked many years for the Incheon City Chorale and now is a composer-in-residence with the National Chorus of Korea. Woo also worked at the University of Michigan as a visiting scholar.

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