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# **THE MUSIC AND CULTURE OF THE KOREAN DIASPORA IN LONDON**

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## Abstract

The Korean diaspora in London was first widely recognised in the latter decades of the twentieth century, and there are currently an estimated 20,000 (South) Koreans residing in London. In addition, since the beginning of the authorised admission of North Koreans as refugees in 2004, many (North) Koreans have come to the UK in search of better lives – their number is now estimated at 620 with more than half living in London. These Koreans from the two distinctive Koreas live as one, forming a minority community in today's Britain. Utilising Slobin's concept of a trio terms, *superculture*, *subculture*, and *interculture*, I investigate multiple cultural layers of the community. Furthermore, I contextualise the spatial features and the purpose of their activities, describing modes of musical presentation, transmission, and participation, as well as how each subgroup expresses in addition to cultivating their sense of identity through music. By citing the vivid stories of professional and amateur musicians, different viewpoints and personal significance of the music reflect individual contrasting diasporic experiences. Broadening its scope to the Chinese and Japanese diasporas in London, this thesis compares the different East Asian perspectives on cultural promotion and preservation, and how these result in distinctive cultural activities in London and its environs. Comprehensively considering the complexities of music and migration, this thesis concludes with a discussion on dominant culture in the community, multiple cultural identity, and music as a medium of healing with particular reference to social cohesion. Negotiating multiple cultural identities, the actors in this thesis demonstrate that embracing and respecting diversity results in insightful understanding of ourselves and others, and makes us able to better adapt while holding on to our own ethnic heritage. Through their activities, Koreans in London have become a 'cultural cohort' (Turino 2008), creating an 'imagined community' (Anderson 2016[1983]) of a unified Korea in a foreign land.

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## Conventions

I use the Revised Romanisation of Korean for Korean terms, Pinyin for Chinese, and Hepburn for Japanese. North Korean Romanisation is specifically used for North Korean terms and the names of people and places, such as '*okryugum*' rather than '*ongryugeum*', 'Kim Jong Il' rather than 'Kim Jeong-Il', and 'Pyongyang' rather than 'Pyeongyang'. Although I render personal names and terms given in Korean in Revised Romanisation with hyphenation, I respect the preferred spellings of those names printed in publications or appearing in recordings and compositions, of interviewees participating in this research, and of those well-known outside of Korea. I also use the academically accepted '*samulnori*' for musical terms, rather than '*samullori*'. In Korea, the family name comes first, followed by the given name (usually consisting of one to three syllables). I follow this convention, except where a person is well-known outside of Korea in that circumstance their given name comes first; or where a person prefers to be known by an English name. Quotation marks are used for the titles of music, compositions, and for dance, with the italicised Korean preceding a forward slash and English translation. All publication titles including books, journals, and newspapers are given in italics. For Korean publications, Korean titles are given in italics in the first instance, followed by an English translation in parentheses. I use the English version of titles where these appear on the original source, but otherwise offer my own translations both in the body and bibliography. Internet sources including news articles are cited in the footnotes unless it is a journal article.

## CHAPTER 1

### Introduction

The current wave of migration to the UK began with the onset of globalisation in the mid-20th century and has been an indisputable mark of modern Britain to this day. (e.g. Cohen 1995, 3; Castles, Haas, and Miller 2014, 117-18). According to data published by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), immigration to OECD countries has been on the rise since the 1960s.<sup>1</sup> The result is that the number of immigrants living in OECD countries increased some 40 percent by the first decade of the 21st century (Arslan et al. 2016, 6). Although countries such as the USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and Argentina were considered ‘classical countries of immigration’ in the past, Western Europe has become an area for labour immigration since the end of World War II (Castles, Haas, and Miller 2014, 14). Indeed, in 2017 the UK was ranked fifth in the world (according to its total migrant population) for its hosting of international migrants.<sup>2</sup> According to the 2017 census conducted by the UK Office for National Statistics (ONS), 6.1 million – roughly 10% – of residents in England and Wales were Non-British.<sup>3</sup> Amongst the regions of the UK, London is home to the largest number of migrants, the number estimated to stand at 3.3 million (41% of the total population).<sup>4</sup> As for ethnicity, only 3.6 million (44.9%) of Londoners were classified as White British.<sup>5</sup> With this in mind, and although one would not normally cite such a source in academic writing, the *Daily Mail*

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<sup>1</sup> A Profile of Immigrant Populations in the 21st Century: Data from OECD Countries, 2008.

<sup>2</sup> International Migration Report 2017 published by United Nations, [http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/publications/migrationreport/docs/MigrationReport2017\\_Highlights.pdf](http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/publications/migrationreport/docs/MigrationReport2017_Highlights.pdf), accessed 15 May 2019.

<sup>3</sup> Population of the UK by country of birth and nationality 2018, <http://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/internationalmigration/datasets/populationoftheunitedkingdombycountryofbirthandnationality>, accessed on 15 May 2019.

<sup>4</sup> <http://migrationobservatory.ox.ac.uk/resources/briefings/migrants-in-the-uk-an-overview>, accessed 15 May 2019.

<sup>5</sup> Regional ethnic diversity 2018, <http://www.ethnicity-facts-figures.service.gov.uk/uk-population-by-ethnicity/national-and-regional-populations/regional-ethnic-diversity/latest>, accessed 15 May 2019.



newspaper published, much as did many other newspapers and journals, an article titled 'White British are the minority in London for the first time.'<sup>6</sup> Moreover, the number of immigrants to the UK has remained remarkably steady, with around 600,000 people settling every year over the past decade (Sturge 2018, 8). These statistics indicate that the UK is no longer a country which develops merely through a process of gradual emigration, but that it is now a multicultural country of continuous immigration by various different groups.

As regards the cultural impact, such a vast movement of migrants provides some fascinating global insights. Most of those who arrive, with the exception of forced migrants, are willing to choose a displaced life and to sacrifice their common cultural background, in moving somewhere unfamiliar. Economic migrants are a case in point, having left their home country for another to seek economically better working or living conditions (Garland 2014, 150). In the same vein, although the many groups of refugees are slightly different to each other, they can collectively be viewed as having been voluntarily displaced from their own country for political, religious, or economic reasons. A range of diverse ethnicities have come to the UK for a number of reasons, including work and study opportunities, and according to the 2011 Census, 14 percent of the UK's total population consist of ethnicities not defined as 'white', with Asian and Asian British categories comprising 7.5 percent of the non-white figure. The largest ethnic demographic in the Census was Indian (2.5 percent), followed by Pakistani, Bangladeshi, and Chinese. The number of 'other Asians' in the UK was estimated at 1.5 percent, a classification that includes the group I am concerned with in this thesis – Koreans. Although this latter number is insignificant in comparison to other majority Asian ethnicities, even such a small ethnic group forms an ethnic enclave and has been able to successfully maintain their ethnic identity in the host country – that is, in the UK.

There are now an estimated 40,000 South Korean residents living in the UK,<sup>7</sup> and more than 50 percent of the total of South Korean immigrants are living

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<sup>6</sup> <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2246689/Census-2011-Decade-changed-face-UK-London-half-white-British.html>, accessed 2 March 2019.

<sup>7</sup> *Jae-oe dongpo hyeonhwang* (Current state of Koreans overseas) 2017, published by Ministry of Foreign Affairs of South Korea.

in and around the Borough of Kingston-upon-Thames (which includes New Malden). Not only South Koreans, but also 620 North Korean refugees are also known to live in the UK (J.J. Song and Bell 2018a, 8), and most also reside in the area of Kingston. Even though the total number is not large in itself, it is significant when taking into account the equivalent migrant number found in other countries outside of the Korean peninsula. For instance, in 2014 the North Korean refugee population in the United States was estimated to be just over 170.<sup>8</sup> In fact, the North Korean refugee community in the UK is considered to be the largest outside of East Asia. The Korean diaspora is a significant group in the borough since they are the third largest of the Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) groups after Indians and Sri Lankans,<sup>9</sup> and are equivalent to about 10 percent of the population of the BAME groups, and make up 2.2 percent of the total population of Kingston.<sup>10</sup> Members of the two distinct Korean communities live as one, forming a minority group in multicultural Britain, which creates its own unique and complex features. Nonetheless, there are only a few academic articles on this topic, which are mostly in Korean language; I have found only three English-language articles. Also, no account published to this point has provided any in-depth description of the diaspora's actual day-to-day lives; they all observe the diaspora from outside the community.

Much of the ethnomusicological research on diasporas focuses more on a specific music genre than on various types of music (see Baumann 1990, Ramnarine 1996, Baily 2006). The case studies I have just mentioned, which will be dealt with in detail later in this chapter, are significant in reminding us of the importance of certain music in diasporas. However, they have limitations in presenting the overall culture of a given diaspora. Comprehensive studies of various musics are a challenge, but essential to understand the culture of a diaspora on the whole. In attempting to determine the cultural complexity of a diaspora, and the social interplay between individuals, small groups, and the

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[http://bushcenter.imgix.net/legacy/gwb\\_north\\_korea\\_executive\\_summary\\_r4.pdf](http://bushcenter.imgix.net/legacy/gwb_north_korea_executive_summary_r4.pdf), accessed 2 March 2019.

<sup>9</sup> <http://data.kingston.gov.uk/jsna/your-kingston-your-health>, accessed 8 April 2019.

<sup>10</sup> Kingston Borough Profile 2013.

community, I draw on Slobin's concept of a trio of terms, *superculture*, an overarching category, *subculture*, an embedded unit, and *interculture*, a crosscutting trend (1992, 2). In his study, Slobin deals with extensive subjects and examples, as his concept is explained in respect to the music of Euro-America in general. Also, diasporic culture is limited to describing one of the types of *interculture*. Despite such differences, his theory still provides me with a useful framework for my thesis, allowing me to analyse the complexity of music and culture. If these concepts are applied to the Korean diaspora in the UK, I presume that Korean ethnic culture can be regarded as *superculture*, small musical units such as ensembles and choirs can be viewed as *subculture*, and the result of interaction between music groups and between individual members is considered *interculture*. Therefore, my research explores the community from an ethnomusicological perspective, and aims to shed light on the cultural significance of the Korean diaspora in London.

With the hypothesis that the Korean diaspora in the UK is composed of various and complex cultures, I address three primary research questions: Firstly, *how the Korean diaspora in London developed and the important role of music activities to this development*. Each diaspora community has its own culture and needs to be studied taking into account various factors including history, circumstance, and relationship with the host country. In this process, their music and musical activities will be also observed as an important signifier that creates diaspora culture. Secondly, *in what manner do Koreans present their cultural activities and use music as a medium of expressing their identities?* They represent single identity as 'one Korea' externally on the one hand, but manifest multiple identities internally by means of music, on the other. Investigation on various Korean cultural festivals, events, and activities reveals how cultural activities create a sense of ethnic identity in a site removed from the homeland, at the same time shaping subordinate identities by groups. Lastly, *what precisely does music mean to individual members of the Korean diaspora?* Everyone has different experience and values, and these are reflected in individuals' musical activities. In answering these questions, I contextualise the spatial features and the changing dynamics of the cultural activities of the community in the past; describe the modes of musical presentation, transmission, and participation by

individuals and groups; explore how music plays a role in the cultivation of individual and collective identity. Finally, applying the categorisation of complexities of music and migration suggested by Baily and Collyer (2006), I analyse the music and culture of the Korean diaspora in London in a comprehensive perspective.

## **1. Identifying diaspora**

Prior to addressing my research in detail, I draw upon concepts and theories of diaspora. Although not necessarily addressing issues raised in my thesis at first-hand, these concepts and theories helped shape my understanding in the initial stages of my research.

The term 'diaspora' is derived from Greek, meaning 'disperse' and 'scatter'. The original use of the term was restricted to the dispersion of the Jews with the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem, and has connotations of a painful loss of homeland combined with the violence of the Roman legions towards Jews. It then came to refer to the movement of Greek and Armenian peoples (Tololyan 1991, 4). Since the early twentieth century, its use has significantly altered from a narrow classical sense into a broad and complex concept. According to Tololyan, the term 'now shares meanings with a larger semantic domain that includes words like immigrants, expatriate, refugee, guest-worker, exile community, overseas community, ethnic community' (ibid.). It has, in addition, been saturated with various associations describing a range of dispersions. However, Clifford (1994, 305) argues that the complexity of the term is an inevitable phenomenon because of its fundamental ambivalence.

The range of meanings associated with the notion of diaspora has always been complex. Connor (1986, 16) argues that diaspora marks a 'segment of a people living outside the homeland'. However, Safran (1991) suggests a narrow sense of the term, defined as 'expatriate minority communities' emphasising Jewish ethnicity. He maintains that the concept of diaspora applies to those who share – with specific reference to the Jewish diaspora – six features:

- 1) they, or their ancestors, have been dispersed from a specific original 'centre' to two or more 'peripheral,' or foreign, regions; 2) they retain a collective memory, vision, or myth about their original homeland – its

physical location, history, and achievements; 3) they believe that they are not – and perhaps cannot be – fully accepted by their host society and therefore feel partly alienated and insulated from it; 4) they regard their ancestral homeland as their true, ideal home and as the place to which they or their descendants would (or should) eventually return – when conditions are appropriate; 5) they believe that they should, collectively, be committed to the maintenance or restoration of their original homeland and to its safety and prosperity; and 6) they continue to relate, personally or vicariously, to that homeland in one way or another, and their ethno communal consciousness and solidarity are importantly defined by the existence of such a relationship (83-4).

In relation to this, Cohen (1997, 22) asserts that in the Jewish case it is 'necessary both to draw critically from the tradition and to be sensitive to its inevitable dilution, changes and expansions of meaning [implied by] the term diaspora as it comes to be more widely applied'. He modifies Safran's list of six diasporic characteristics into nine, encompassing various new patterns of diasporic conditions. The first, 'dispersal from an original homeland, often traumatically, to two or more foreign regions' relates to Safran's first point. Cohen adds that, 'alternatively or additionally, the expansion from a homeland in search of work, in pursuit of trade or to further colonial ambitions' forms a second condition. The third describes 'a collective memory and myth about the homeland, including its location, history, suffering and achievements' which relates to Safran's second point. His fourth idea encompasses 'an idealization of the real or imagined ancestral home and a collective commitment to its maintenance, restoration, safety and prosperity, even to its creation.' This is similar to Safran's idea of maintenance or restoration of an original homeland. Cohen's fifth point describes 'the frequent development of a return movement to the homeland that gains collective approbation even if many in the group are satisfied with only a vicarious relationship or intermittent visits to the homeland', which is related to Safran's notion of an ancestral homeland to which members of the diaspora may eventually return. The sixth, 'a troubled relationship with host societies, suggesting a lack of acceptance or the possibility that another calamity might befall the group,' is connected to Safran's idea of feeling partly alienated from the

host society. The last three conditions develop from Safran's assertion of an ethno-communal consciousness and solidarity; the seventh being a strong ethnic group consciousness sustained over a long time period and based on a sense of distinctiveness, a common history, the transmission of a common cultural and religious heritage and the belief in a common fate; the eighth being a sense of empathy and co-responsibility with co-ethnic members in other countries of settlement even when their homeland has become more vestigial; and the ninth being the possibility of a distinctive creative, enriching life in host countries with a tolerance for pluralism (ibid., 180). This gave me a basic frame to work with as I approached my research.

The notion of diaspora has, however, become widespread, and its use is diverse. Recognising this gave me a challenge, since I began to realise that no one framework would be adequate for my research. Tololyan (1996, 3-6) points out that the widespread and diverse use of the term is problematic in that it has become a far-reaching notion which can accommodate all types of dispersion, although he accepts the need for a wider definition as times change. He develops Connor's definition with the condition that for diaspora groups 'it is necessary to exist as a collectivity rather than a scattering of individuals' (ibid., 29). He underscores the importance of retaining ethnic identity as a community marker for a diaspora; otherwise most emigrants living in any modern immigrant-nation would be classed as diasporan. In this regard, Sheffer (2003, 17) contends that the distinction between migrants and diasporans is that modern ethnic diasporas intend not only to maintain and nurture ethno-national identities, but also to be identified, organised, and to act within the framework of diaspora organisations. Brubaker (2005, 5-6) asserts that there are three core elements which satisfy the conditions of a diaspora: dispersion, homeland orientation, and boundary-maintenance. Agreement on the definition and range of diaspora has not been universally reached, but most scholars share a common ground regarding some conditions, such as living outside a homeland, a homeland orientation and maintaining an ethnic identity.

Recently, scholars have not only attempted a formal definition of the term diaspora but have also distinguished between different kinds of diasporas. Cohen (1997, 31-154) categorises five different types according to their features and

gives typical examples. The first is the 'Victim Diaspora' – which includes Jews, Africans, and Armenians. The second is the 'Labour Diaspora' and refers to indentured Indians; the third, the 'Imperial Diaspora,' contrasts with this in that it is associated with intervention by the British. The fourth is the 'Trade Diaspora,' referring to Lebanese and Chinese. Finally, the 'Deterritorialised Diaspora' includes the Caribbean, Sindhi, and Parsi. Esman (2009, 15-18) modifies Cohen's five-part typology into three classes, claiming that the role of diaspora has developed over time from settler and labourer to entrepreneur. Sheffer (2003, 73) asserts that there are two essential criteria for distinguishing between diasporas; the status of their respective homeland and the length of time a diaspora has spent away from the homeland. The homeland status divides between stateless diasporas and state-linked diasporas; stateless diasporas are those, such as the Romani (Gypsies), who are unable to establish their own independent state, whereas state-linked diasporas are those physically residing in host countries but connected to the society of their ethnic origin. This 'homeland status' idea initially attracted me due to the different natures of the North Korean and South Korean diasporas in Britain. He also contends that diasporas can be classified by factors such as age into three categories based on their history of diaspora dispersion: historical (or classical) diasporas, modern (or recent) diasporas, and incipient diasporas. Thus, scholars have attempted to departmentalise and disambiguate the notion of diaspora as the term has been expanded over time.

## **2. The context for the research**

### **2.1. The Korean diaspora in London**

Based on the research questions I addressed at the beginning of this chapter, I shall first explore the literatures related to the Korean diaspora in London. Compared to the existing studies on the Korean diasporas in other countries, the UK Korean community began to gain attention relatively late. The first research subject on this field was not on South or North Koreans, but the Korean-Chinese migrants, *joseonjok*. Kim Hyunmee (2008) investigates the migration experiences of Korean-Chinese people living in the New Malden area and describes their process of immigration and life in England through ethnographic research. The immigration of Korean-Chinese started following the

relaxation of Chinese immigration and entry policies to the UK. Korean-Chinese began to settle in Britain in 1996, although the population has rapidly grown roughly only since 2004, and by 2008 was estimated to comprise 1,500 individuals (ibid., 54-55). Lee Jeanyoung also looks at the Korean-Chinese demographic in the UK from the perspective of it being a transnational community, and asserts that they have close relationship with other Koreans (2012a, 70). As such, this community shares a common ethnic and historical background with both South Koreans and North Koreans, since historically their ancestors migrated northwards into China from Korea, so it is possible for them to be included as a part of the Korean diaspora in the UK. However, as Lee Soojung and Lee Woo-young (2014, 141) have indicated, many Korean-Chinese are staying in the UK illegally. As economic migrants, they can only obtain a valid visa for a specific time period, yet many people fail to return to their home country once their visa expires. To avoid detection by the authorities, they are, thus, reluctant to participate in any community events. What is more, Korean-Chinese, in particular, have already experienced living as part of a diaspora in China, as I described earlier. Thus, they re-migrated to the UK and it could be said that their experience and characteristics are different from the two 'classical' Korean diasporas, from today's North and South Korea. With this in mind, my research does not include Korean-Chinese within my consideration of the Korean diaspora.

Although the above studies briefly introduce something of the field, in-depth research into the overall Korean community in London began in the 2010s. In his research, Lee Jeanyoung (2012b) explores general information about the area and introduces a variety of Korean events. This study is significant in that it constituted the first investigation on Koreatown in London, though it was limited to the basic information. Park Wonseok (2015) analyses the characteristics of the immigration path and residential location of the South Koreans. He appropriately asserts that the South Korean immigrants are divided into two groups in accordance with the location of their residence: ethnic enclave-oriented type living in the community and mainstream society-oriented type living outside of the community (ibid., 487). It provides me with an understanding of the characteristics of the community. From an historical perspective, Gim Jeomsuk (2015) determines the impact of the economic policy of the Park Chunghee



administration on the formation of the UK Korean community. Unlike most scholars who claimed that the Middle East Boom was the main trigger of the formation of the UK Korean society, she argues that export-oriented industrialisation of the south Korean government played a significant role in the establishment of the society (ibid., 268). This presents a new perspective with in-depth knowledge of the historical background of the community.

Research into North Korean refugees in the UK began in 2014, when Lee Soo jung and Lee Woo young (2014) divided what defined the character of New Malden as Koreatown into three categories: a living space for ethnic minorities, an economic space of ethnic Koreans and a transnational space which was shared, in practice, by the Korean diaspora. The characterisations by such writers identified New Malden as a Korean diasporic transnational contact zone. They asserted that North and South Koreans understood the need to cooperate for the benefit of the overall community, while retaining distance from each other (ibid., 168-70). Shin HaeRan (2018) also regards this area as where North and South Koreans actively interact with each other, and in the process, the community has been re-territorialised by its members. While these studies focus on the integration of the two Korean groups, Iain Watson (2015) places emphasis on their divisions and disconnection, and seeks the reasons behind this. He goes further and states that the 'sense of exclusion for the North Korean group from the Korean diaspora in the UK can often lead to a direct belonging within and to the actual host society' (ibid., 559). These two conflicting viewpoints allow me to look at the field from various angles.

Jay Jiyoung Song and Markus Bell (2018) describe how and why North Koreans came to be in the UK by using transnational networks of brokers, families, and friends, focusing on the fact that most North Koreans in the UK are secondary asylum seekers from South Korea. This provides me with the understanding and details of the North Korean refugees' migrant process. Unlike the studies above whose main purpose was to observe the field, Jay Song and Steven Denney (2019) additionally discuss the challenges that they faced during their fieldwork. They describe how 'North Korean men typically view female researchers as subordinates' (ibid., 455), yet I did not feel or encounter the same while conducting my research. I will deal with this more in the following section. In

summary, there are only a few English-language accounts on my subject, yet it is particularly significant in that they reveal the unique characteristics of the Korean community in London, where North and South Koreans live together, and how this draws the attention of the international academic community.

The studies cited differ in their use of the term 'diaspora'. Kim Hyunmee (2008), Lee Soo-jung and Lee Woo-young (2014) and Watson (2015) use the term without explaining what the purpose of using it in their work is, and why Koreans are classified by them as a diaspora. Meanwhile, the other accounts do not use the term and do not provide explicit reasons for not doing so. This raises the question of whether South Korean immigrants and North Korean refugees in London can be classified as a 'diaspora.' When it comes to Safran's criteria, they can hardly be classified as such since they cannot meet the fourth condition –namely, their home country is a place to which they or their descendants will (or should) eventually return. However, not all Koreans in the UK consider their home country a viable option for eventual return. Rather, the UK is considered a permanent, but still second home. However, Safran (1991, 84) admits that none of the diasporas he studied fully conform to the 'original' ideal Jewish type of diaspora. Nor do they conform to Cohen's six characteristics, although most of the attributes he outlines can be applied to Koreans in the UK.

Again, as Clifford (1994, 306) points out, none of the diasporas he considers satisfy all the criteria simultaneously. Even the Jewish diaspora, which is considered to be the original diaspora, cannot satisfy all the requirements put forward by scholars. Therefore, my thesis argues that South Korean immigrants and North Korean refugees in London comprise a type of diaspora on the following basis: firstly, they live outside their homeland as a group (which most scholars regard as a fundamental component of diaspora). Secondly, they possess collective memories of their homeland as described by Brubaker's 'homeland orientation'. Thirdly, they maintain their ethnic identity in various ways as a group community. However, there is a difference between the two component groups in this diaspora: while South Koreans are free to return home, North Koreans can never return to their home country as they are considered to be 'criminal' defectors by the North Korean regime. How the different status of the two influences their cultural activities is one of the main concerns of my dissertation.

Moving to a more broadly regional focus, I next look into how the Korean diaspora in London is similar to or different from other Korean diasporas worldwide drawing the cases of the Korean diaspora in Japan, China, and the US, where most Korean immigrants reside. Firstly, the Korean diaspora in Japan is considered to correspond to the most stringent sense of diaspora, since most of them were sent by force and faced severe discrimination and persecution (I. Yoon 2017, 37). Specifically, 634,093 male Koreans were taken to Japan as forced labour between 1939 and 1944, working in various fields such as coal and ore mining, construction and civil engineering, and manufacturing (Yöngdal Kim 1991, 31; Weiner 1989, 50). The number reached more than two million by the end of World War II (Ryang 2000, 3), but many returned to South Korea following the war, and about 600,000 remained. Those remaining in Japan can be divided yet again into those who were originally from the areas which eventually came to be known as South Korea and the areas of what became North Korea: 350,000 and 250,000 from South and North, respectively (C. Lee and Vos 1981, 146). These groups, known as *Jae-ilbon Joseonin Chong-yeonhaphoe (Chongryeon)* and *Jae-ilbon Daehanmin-gungmindan (Mindan)*, are affiliated to North and South Korea, respectively. Most Koreans in Japan identify with one of these two as regards ethnic and political identity (Ryang 1997, 5). This creates the first distinction between the Koreans in Japan and in the UK. North and South Koreans in London generally live within close proximity, and in doing so both groups form a single Korean community. Although these North and South Koreans do have their own representative organisation respectively, these neither maintain political nor national identity, but aim to protect their rights and interests as minorities. Thus, the two are not hostile towards each other.

Another factor that brings a clear difference between the Koreans in Japan and in the UK is the experience in their home country. In Japan, *Chongryeon* has set up around 150 schools ranging from primary to tertiary, teaching the North Korean curriculum to the children of Korean migrants, who today are mostly made up of third to fourth generation migrants. This education system has proved to be the key to orientating the *Chongryeon* social community and North Korean identities abroad (ibid., 23). However, it is hard to say whether those in Japan would have had the same identity as Koreans living in North Korea, since they

have never experienced living in the country. Moreover, their official first language is Japanese and they tend to be exposed to Japanese culture in their everyday lives. In contrast, most North Koreans in London grew up and were educated in North Korea, but escaped from the country. This difference in experience is bound to create a different attitude toward their home country.

The unique Korean Japanese identity called *zainichi* (foreign citizens residing in Japan) also creates a huge difference between Koreans in Japan and in the UK. As a *zainichi* herself, Sonia Ryang claims that *Chongryeon* is closely linked with the formation of *zainichi*, redefining the identity of Koreans in Japan and serving to give voice to their reservations towards Japanese society (1997, 219). There are various interpretations of the *zainichi* identity, but many consider it as having negative connotations, since this complicates the process of finding one's self-identity (Kashiwazaki 2009, 134; Kim-Wachutka 2019, 11). Kim Tong-myung (1988, 68-69) refers to a 'third way' identity, which he uses to describe those born and living in Japan, without being totally Korean or totally Japanese – in other words, having a hybrid *zainichi* identity. Chapman sees the interpretations of *zainichi* as being 'multiple and dynamic and constantly being negotiated and renegotiated at multiple intersections on numerous axes' (2008, 44). Clearly, Korean Japanese have their own unique identity, making them markedly distinct from both North and South Koreans in anywhere in the world – including in the UK.

Koreans in China have the longest history and the largest scale. Their first mass migration began in 1869 to Manchuria, China and Primorskii in Russia to escape poverty and famine reclaiming wasteland or land with disputed status (G.G. Lee 1994, 15-19). More Koreans moved to China during the Japanese occupation either voluntarily to participate in the independence movement of Korea, or forcibly by the Japanese government after the Manchurian Incident of 1931 in order to build the infrastructure (Sin 2012, 248-53). These Koreans became one of minorities in China being called *joseonjok*. There are an estimated 1.92 million Korean-Chinese currently residing in China, and most of them are third or fourth generation descendants who today exhibit a mixed Korean and Chinese identity (J.-n. Jung 2008, 83). According to Lim and Kim (2002, 255), these Korean-Chinese regard their culture and identity as closer to Chinese or

*joseonjok* themselves, rather than North or South Koreans. In the long history of immigration, they have already become much assimilated to the Chinese people and created their own culture. Furthermore, over 700,000 Korean-Chinese re-migrated to other countries including South Korea, Japan, North America, and Russia, forming a new global identity (W. Choi 2017, 273-76). Considering the migrant history of Koreans in China as shown above, there are two distinctive factors that contrast Koreans in China and in the UK. The migration history of the Koreans in the UK is relatively short compared to those in China, so the UK Koreans have not assimilated much yet into their new country. Moreover, it is hard to find a case of the UK Koreans' re-migration to another country, unlike those from China, though many have returned to their homeland.

Korean immigration to the US began in 1903 when more than 7,000 young Koreans, mostly men in their 20s, moved to Hawai'i to work on sugar cane farms (Patterson 1988, 92). However, with the Japanese annexation of Korea in 1910, around 2,500 Koreans left Hawai'i to return to Korea or to move to the western part of the United States' mainland (ibid., 172-73). From the Korea's liberation in 1945 to the early 1960s, many Koreans moved to the United States as child adoptees of American families, as adult spouses of US soldiers, and as students who went to study abroad on a short-term basis. The number was only 688 between 1946 and 1955, but rapidly increased to 10,179 by 1965 (Guksapyeonchan-wiwonhoe 2007, 118). This number reached to 2.49 million by 2017, which is the second largest number of Koreans outside the Korean peninsula after China.<sup>11</sup> Armstrong reveals that Korean immigrants in the US tended to be highly educated compared to other immigrant groups (2014, 120). Despite their high educational background in Korea, a large proportion of the first generation of immigrants was self-employed to make a living. However, with the enthusiasm for education of the first generation, a higher percentage of 1.5 or second-generation Koreans was in professional work in the US (I. Yoon and Lim 2008, 432). Similar to these, many first-generation South Koreans in the UK also have a high educational background, as most were sent to the UK to work by Korean companies. However, when they decided to settle in the UK, they had to

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<sup>11</sup> *Jae-oe dongpo hyeonhwang* (Current state of Koreans overseas) 2017, published by Ministry of Foreign Affairs of South Korea.

quit their jobs and became self-employed to make a living, running real estate agencies, private companies, or agencies for Koreans studying abroad.

Another feature of Koreans in the US is that they are largely Christian. While less than 30 percent are Christian in South Korea, over 80 percent of Koreans in the US claim to be Christian, primarily Protestant, and Korean churches became the main centre of socialisation among those Koreans (Armstrong 2014, 120). This phenomenon is also found in the Korean community in the UK. There are around 100 Korean Protestant churches in London, and these play important roles in cultural transmission, maintenance, as well as socialisation.

Therefore, the Korean diasporas in the US and South Koreans in London share similarities with each other, and both can be defined as one of the 'incipient diasporas' that Sheffer (2003, 113) identifies, made up mostly of labour migrants who maintain emotional and social ties with their homeland. However, there is still a significant difference between these two groups due to the existence of North Korean refugees. Since this field is the only form of Korean diaspora in the world where both North and South Koreans pursue to be a united Korean community, I shall take a closer look at the historical development and cultural activities of the Korean diaspora in London in Chapter 3.

Expanding the scope from Korea to the world, I shall briefly discuss how the two Koreas differ from other countries in conflict. For instance, North and South Cyprus have an issue of ethnicity between Greek and Turkish, and North and South Sudan have conflicts from different ethnicities or religions. The case of the People's Republic of China and the Republic of China, commonly known as Taiwan, is a little more complicated by factors such as history, politics, language and ethnicity: the main issue is that the PRC sticks to a One-China principle, which asserts only one state under the name China, while the ROC claims to be an independent country, which has not been resolved to this date. However, all the three cases above have something in common that people in countries with conflicts argue that they are different to each other and want to be separated. Unlike these countries, though, people in the two Koreas have no problem seeing themselves as one ethnicity, other than political issues. Moreover, Koreans on both sides wish to be united, although the Korean peninsula has been officially

divided over 67 years and there has been little interaction with each other during the time. Due to this, and because of linguistic and ethnic commonality, Koreans from the two Koreas are able to live in the same area forming one Korean community in London. This distinguishes them from the communities from other divided or conflicted lands.

## **2.2. Music, identity, and diaspora**

Since investigating the diaspora from an ethnomusicological point of view is central to my thesis, I begin with emphasising the importance of music in diaspora, drawing on Mark Slobin:

Music is central to the diasporic experience, linking homeland and here-land with an intricate network of sound. Whether through the burnished memory of childhood songs, the packaged passions of recordings, or the steady traffic of live bands, people identify themselves strongly, even principally, through their music (1994, 243).

Slobin adds that music 'forms a particularly crucial point of articulation in viewing diasporic life' (ibid., 244). This is reasonable since music provides a means by which people can recognise their identity in a particular place and the boundaries which separate them (Stokes 1994, 5); it is 'an important symbol of identity' (Rice 2010, 319).

This leads me to my second research question, *in what manner Koreans present their cultural activities and use music as a medium of expressing their identities*. Slobin asserts that 'today music is at the heart of individual, group, and national identity' (ibid.), which deeply relates to the three cultural spheres he respectively lists: national/ethnic identity as a superculture, group identity as a subculture, and individual identity as an interculture.

Constructing ethnic identity through music in diaspora communities has been a main concern in diaspora and music research. Martin Stokes suggests a theoretical model which can grasp relations between ethnicity, identity and music. His three key concepts are affective, material and vocal aspects, which can respectively be explained as shared feelings, distinct instruments, and recognisable sounds, these three encompassing the primary human senses that relate to music (Stokes 2017). Some previous research on the music of the Korean

diaspora are cases in point. Through the investigation on Korean folk songs which create shared feelings and recognisable sounds, Song Bang Song determines how Koreans in Canada preserve a Korean musical tradition in a new land (1975). Donna Lee Kwon (2001) explores the role of music in the process of defining Korean American communities and identities, through a study of a specific genre of traditional Korean music, *pungmul*, which exactly accords with Stokes's three key concepts above. She asserts that *pungmul* acts as not only an important connection among Koreans within the US, but cements transnational ties between South Korea and the US. Looking at another music tradition, Yu Young-min (2007) examines the transformations of Korean music performance among the communities of Koreans who are politically affiliated with North Korea in Japan and South Koreans in Los Angeles. Her research illustrates the significance of the *Arirang* traditional folksong, which creates shared feelings to Koreans from both parts of the divided peninsula. Unfortunately, however, she does not actually show how the folksong is utilised in collaboration by people from the two Koreas, since she separately investigates the North and South Korean diasporan communities in their respective countries.

The relations between ethnic identity and music have been a major subject of study for other diasporas as well. Averill (1994) demonstrates how music evoked both nostalgic and more representative memories of the homeland to the Haitian diaspora in America, and claims music constructs ethnic solidarity. Through investigating three generations of Japanese Americans in California, Asai (1997) argues that third-generation musicians embrace traditional Japanese music styles through their own volition and in search of ethnic identity. Exploring two amateur Chinese music clubs in Singapore, Lau (2005) describes how the community evolved while demonstrating 'Chineseness' in Singapore. He asserts that clubs not only contribute to the cultural richness of the nation, but also reaffirm the collective memories of being Teochew. As such, music is deeply connected to ethnic identity, so that members of diaspora communities are able to signal their distinctive identities by means of music shared in common with the majority.

Festivals and events, in particular, have been important places to present unique cultural identity. McClinchey specifically notes the significance of ethnic



festivals:

Festivals celebrate cultural traditions as well as allow for the commercial and social exchange between residents, retailers, exhibitors, and visitors. Ethnic festival, in particular, showcase the ethnic culture of communities that have settled in a region due to immigration (2008, 251).

Several ethnic festivals are held in London, and the Notting Hill Carnival and the Chinese New Year Festival have established themselves as particularly representative events of London. Koreans have also organised various festivals in London. Through the case studies, I shall investigate how Koreans in London express their ethnic identity through music and cultural events, and how they differ from the events held by the Chinese and Japanese diasporas. First and foremost, how two Korean groups of different nationalities present the same ethnic identity will be explored in Chapter 4.

Having addressed the relation between music and ethnic identity in a diaspora, I now move to another social identity that forms a subculture in a diaspora. How is the subculture constructed in a diaspora? Graumann's notion of multiple identities and value-systems provides a useful basis:

Multiplicity of identity results from the many ways we have successfully been identified by our social environment, mainly by reference groups and persons...Identifications with persons, groups, and objects are closely connected with the establishment of a person's value-system and that values are not experienced as random, we may conclude that, in principle, identities are as structured as values (1983, 315-18).

Indeed, everyone has a multiple identity and people who pursue the same values gather to form a subculture in a society. Participating in group musical activities is a representative case in point. Nonetheless, there are not many studies about the subculture of diasporas, since, I assume, a diaspora is mainly regarded as an ethnic community rather than as a group of individuals. In other words, as a member of a diaspora, ethnic identity is more emphasised than individuals' multiple identities. However, Rice claims that a new perspective is required:

Geographical, economic, cultural, and social mobility untied to

ostensibly traditional ethnic, national, gender, and class identities and categories; and that life “routes” are becoming as or more important than “roots” (2007, 19-20).

In the same vein, Ramnarine asserts that ‘if we also discard “ethnicity”, we can take another look at knowledge of peoples, places, and reified domains of cultures’ (2007, 8). This shows that a variety of subcultures of a diaspora are as important as the ethnic (or super-) culture. In this sense, Zheng’s description and analysis on the subculture of the Chinese diaspora in the US suggests a useful perspective on diaspora emphasising identity negotiation of each group and individuals rather than focusing on ethnic identity. Specifically, she compares the different attitudes toward music activities of the two music groups in the Chinese diaspora in New York City, and reveals that the difference is largely affected by their contrasting experiences of voluntary or involuntary immigration (Zheng 1990, 63). Later, she developed her study investigating how activities of the various Chinese American music groups operate from private to public, and explored what it means and what roles it have within the Chinese diaspora as well as in the mainstream society (Zheng 2010, 169-200).

North Korean refugees in London not only participate in various music activities related to their interest as individuals, but also form their own subculture in the diaspora as a group. Would the music and performances they present here be the same as that in their home country? With regard to this, Giuriati (2005) explores the music of the Cambodian diaspora in the US. He determines that, as a refugee community, their music interestingly does not resemble that of contemporary Cambodia, since their music was created using only their imagination as the point of reference. Another concern for them is related to the identity of the younger generation, who were born in the UK. Diehl (2002) describes how Western-influenced music, specifically rock-and-roll, has affected young Tibetan refugees in North India in terms of them preserving their identity and the core values of their community. Aken (2006) also observes the music and dance of fourth-generation Palestinian refugees in the Jordan Valley and investigates how they negotiate and reproduce identity to create a place for solitude. Reflecting on this, through the investigation of several music groups in multiple level of places which create subculture in the Korean diaspora, the roles

and identity of each group will be discussed in Chapter 5.

Narrowing the scope down to individuals, I now move on to the third research question, *what does music mean to individual members of the Korean diaspora*. It is essential to investigate individuals' music activities to understand society as a whole, since both experiences of music-making and music listening 'describe the social in the individual and the individual in the social' (Frith 1996, 109). Particularly, in the diasporic context, Ramnarine argues that:

Diasporic music-making can be understood in the ordinariness of creative production, as musicians working as individual agents in their everyday environments, making musical choices that suit them and their audiences (2007, 7).

Indeed, individual musicians pursue various pathways in accordance with their choice, and musicians who play ethnic traditional music in diaspora have two representative careers. One is the maintenance of tradition. Sutton (1987) describes in detail how the traditional Korean cultural scene developed, and specifically highlights the significant roles of individual Korean artists who migrated to Hawai'i in constructing and developing Korean culture in the diasporic community. Maria Kongju Seo (2001) investigates how Korean music is transplanted, nurtured, and transformed in the US through both a chronicled overview and through a detailed ethnographic research on individual musicians and organisations. Looking at the wider scene beyond the Korean diaspora, Sapoznik(1997) underscores the importance and impact of one individual musician in representing Jewish identity through Klezmer music in the US Jewish diaspora. Such musicians contribute greatly to a diaspora for the maintenance and transmission of ethnic culture.

The other side of the coin is the creation of intercultural. Musicians, much the same as other people, challenge their cultural identity while living in a new environment. This is well illustrated in Hammarlund's study (1994), exploring how an individual Turkish musician in Sweden dealt with social realities and established a new role for himself in his new society. Experiencing such a new environment and culture, musicians will often create new music, which can be regarded as a form of 'intercultural'. Through the investigation on South Asian musicians in Britain, Farrell, Bhowmick and Welch (2005) explicitly show how

ethnic traditional music is transformed within a different social context and, thereby, a new form of music is created. They also emphasise the importance of individual musicians in creating new music:

The responsibility for such changes in a system often lies with an individual musician working within a specific situation that demands adjustments to suit community requirements, audience tastes or the needs of learners (ibid., 117).

Contrary to ethnic traditional musicians who strive to claim their culture within mainstream society, Western classical musicians and pop musicians try to be recognised in mainstream culture, overcoming their different cultural background. This is well elaborated in Zheng's study through one musician's experience. As a Chinese musician who composes Western classical music, Chen Yi addresses that she does not consider her music to be American music due to the Chinese culture inherent in herself, though she has successfully taken her place in American contemporary music circles (Zheng 2010, 262). I shall explore whether this phenomenon is the same for Korean musicians in London in Chapter 6.

Music is not limited to professional musicians, but is something anyone can enjoy. However, more studies focus on professional music-making, rather than music of non-professionals. With this in mind, Finnegan (2007) explores the significance of music activities among non-professional musicians exploring the local music of Milton Keynes. She emphasises the benefits of music-making for individuals such as being a leisure activity or a channel for self-expression, and/or having meaning for personal identity (ibid., 307). In the diaspora context, Zheng (2010) looks at the music activities of non-professionals drawing Chinese American music groups in the Chinese diaspora. However, it is hard to understand what each individual thinks about his/her music activity, as the study is directed toward the groups rather than the individuals.

Music activities of North Korean refugees are one of the central topics in this thesis. Are their activities different from South Korean immigrants in the community? Reyes (1999) provides a useful perspective that might inform this, demonstrating how music, specifically songs, is used in a different way by Vietnamese refugees in two areas in general: refugee camps and migrant

communities. She argues that 'that tradition is selective [and] is by now axiomatic. But the grounds for selection differ among forced and voluntary migrants' (ibid., 172). Moreover, forced migrants are more likely to have traumatic memories than voluntary migrants. For those people, music can be a means of healing and comfort, as has been illustrated in other studies such as Pilzer (2011) and Lafreniere (2000). Through vivid stories, how music affects and plays a role in individual lives in diaspora is discussed in Chapter 6.

Finally, I need to conclude this section with an overview of several studies on music and diaspora in Britain. While not necessarily addressing issues raised in my thesis, these have helped me develop a general understanding of the music of the earlier diasporas in Britain. Due to the UK's legacy of colonisation, there is plenty of research on the music and diaspora of those who have migrated to Britain, perhaps most notably on African music in England. Oliver, in *Black Music in Britain* (1990), explains how this developed in two periods: 1800-1950 and 1950s-present. Oliver asserts that black musicians' performances were essentially for the entertainment of white audiences until 1950, when the realm of black music expanded by addressing another audience as second-generation migrants found their place in the world and the black population of the UK increased. This is noteworthy since Oliver shows how the position of black music changed over time and with social pressures. *Black Popular Music in Britain since 1945* (Stratton and Zuberi 2014) features 11 contributions that examine different music genres arranged chronologically. These show how black music has developed and become popular in Britain, in what was a traditionally white-dominant society, and has overcome unfavourable resistance such as racism and inequality. From this, I am able to appreciate that the scope of an individual's diasporic journey illustrates how a migrant finds a sense of belonging while moving through various countries by listening to the same genres of music as others. A further source demonstrates this well: Carolyn Landau (2012) specifically notes the way in which the Moroccan public musical sphere is represented in London Online and in the media.

Turning to Indian music in the UK, Baumann (1990) investigates how 'bhangra' became popular in Britain and insists that far from being a new genre, it is an invented genre which articulates social changes and aesthetic shifts that

are part of life in the UK. Ramnarine (1996) examines the Indian-Caribbean musical genre 'chutney' in both Caribbean and British contexts: although chutney is now an established popular genre in Trinidad, it is still only well-known to members of a specific community in Britain. With much the same in mind, Gorringer (2005) identifies the changing role of a dancer's solo debut in a South Indian tradition in the context of the Indian diaspora in the UK. In contrast, Baily (2006), observing the Indian Muslim Khalifa community in the UK, insists that music in Khalifa acts as a way to divide, rather than unite, members of the community. His observation is strikingly different from most other research, which typically emphasises the role of music as a means for solidarity within communities. Farrell et al. (2005), for example, gives an overview of the musical preferences of South Asians in the UK, and examines connections between language, religion, regional background, and musical genres. Their research highlights the significant influence of the re-exportation of South Asian diaspora music to India. Fundamentally, most research on diaspora and music in Britain coalesces around diaspora from the above countries. It is, then, interesting to have this previous research in mind as I explore similarities and differences in the particularities I find within the UK Korean diaspora, but, because of the significant differences, none of the existing research on other diaspora communities, and the frameworks that these employ, can fully explain the Korean diaspora.

### **3. Methodology**

This thesis is the result of almost five years of interaction with the Korean community in London between 2014 and 2019 (and continuing), and attempts to survey a complex set of viewpoints based on interviews and my observations of and participation in musical activities. Several methods, from the ethnographic tradition of anthropology to ethnomusicological theory, have been drawn upon. Above all, my aim has been less to record and analyse music than ‘to understand music in the context of human behaviour’, taking my lead from Alan Merriam (1964, 42).

Considering ethnomusicological research, Rice’s (1987) model is mainly utilised throughout this thesis. His model was developed from the well-known model of Merriam, which involved three levels of analysis: musical cognition, behaviour in relation to music, and the sound of the music itself (Merriam 1964, 32). Rice updated this, reflecting the academic concerns in ethnomusicology of his time, and developing a two-way directional approach, using a method that includes multiple relations between three categories: historical construction, social maintenance, and individual creation and experience. Historical construction analyses the process of change with the passage of time; social maintenance is the ongoing interaction between constructed modes of behaviour; and individual creation and experience elaborates on the results of recreated, modified and interpreted traditions. I apply these three in the following chapters as I analyse musical behaviour and the processes through which the Korean diaspora operates: historical construction (primarily in chapter 3), social maintenance (primarily in chapter 4 and 5), and individual creation and experience (primarily in chapter 6). As Rice insists, ‘historical construction can also be interpreted as diachronic’ (1987, 476), hence, I consider the cultural history of the Korean diaspora and its evolution. The historical data I collected is used to provide an understanding of the history and the past cultural activities of the diaspora, using several community newspapers written in Korean, as well as collected from individuals directly connected with important events. In terms of social maintenance, I observe how community members construct and sustain their culture and identity by employing various types of music through group activities, cultural events, and education. By joining the dots, individual

experiences illustrate how community members modify and interpret their cultural activities. Thus, Rice's model is best suited to understand the cultural diversity of a diaspora, and will go a long way towards identifying *superculture*, *subculture*, and *interculture* (Slobin's terms) of the Korean diaspora in London.

With this model in mind, I have used both quantitative and qualitative data. A quantitative method was utilised to gather information from participants by means of formal questionnaires. In respect to events and group-level collection, the questionnaires were designed in a multiple-choice manner to double with an effective marketing method, asking about prior experience on Korean cultural events, satisfaction levels about each programme elements and about events overall, and the intention of those questioned to revisit the following year of take advantage of other activities. In addition, I included a descriptive question where informants were invited to express their free opinion. The questionnaires were kept confidential, but the participants' gender, age, ethnicity, and nationality were collected through the multiple-choice format. A total of seven questionnaires were conducted: three at Korean cultural events, two at the London Korean School (LKS), and two at London Korean Nationality School (LKNS). I received 36 completed questionnaires at Kingston Welcomes Korea, and gathered 171 and 211 completed questionnaires at Kingston Korean Festival in 2016 and 2017 respectively. At the LKS, my survey with five short-answer questions was conducted to both parents and students, and 43 completed questionnaires from parents and 49 from students were collected. The questionnaires were planned to inform me of the reason and satisfaction levels of having children attend the LKS, and asked parents' opinions on music education, and students' interest in music and their perception of Korean music. At the LKNS, I conducted the questionnaire twice in order to assess how attitudes and perceptions toward music broadly and Korean music specifically changed. The first questionnaire surveyed the situation before students took the music class, using the same questionnaire as the one used at the LKS. The second was conducted after they had taken the class for six months, and this was modified in a multiple-choice manner because the students at the LKNS were younger than the students at the LKS. I collected 17 and 11 completed questionnaires from the first and second rounds respectively. A detailed description of each questionnaire



is explained in the relevant chapter, and the formal questionnaires can be found in Appendix. Besides the quantitative data, I also utilised other research methods specifically at the LKS and the LKNS in observing music classes and school events, and interviewing with teachers. I completed most of my observations on the LKS on three visits, and additional questions were able to be resolved by phone or email without visiting the school in person, thanks to my personal relationships with the music teacher and the head teacher of the LKS. In respect to the LKNS, I visited the school every Saturday between May and December 2017 to conduct a long-term observation project.

Qualitative methods evaluate the expressive voices of individuals or small groups, and use interviews. During my fieldwork, I held formal interviews with 37 individuals in total: 17 professional musicians, six amateur musicians, and 14 representatives of cultural organisations. These were carefully chosen based on a method of strategic sampling, in which I attempted to find informants who would suitably represent each category. Specifically, when recruiting participants for the data reported in Chapter 6, I took into account complex factors such as age, gender, and career, since oral testimonies of experiences were to form a significant portion of my discussion. With regard to interviews, I prepared some key questions, but I let the story flow freely during the interview. If interviewees were side-tracked, I tried to steer the conversation back so that I could collect the information I felt I needed to obtain. All data was recorded with the permission of informants, and transcription of interviews was made, though not always word for word. Only the relevant parts of the interviews are selected and cited directly or indirectly throughout this thesis in order to build my account in a consistent manner. I have, however, tried to minimise modifications from verbatim citations, and endeavour to faithfully convey what those interviewed had wanted to deliver.

Validating data can be a fundamental challenge of using oral testimonies in an academic dissertation. However, most of those I formally interviewed were rather well-known figures in the Korean community, thus I was able to find evidence to support their testimonies such as printed performance flyers, newspapers, or photographs/videos. Where I was not able to obtain such

verification, I cross-checked with other sources to weigh the authenticity of what I was told.

Since there are not that many traditional Korean musicians based in London, I was able to interview them all (although one formerly prominent musician based outside London was not prepared to be interviewed). I realised that there are more women in the traditional scene in the Korean diaspora in London, but this is due to a long-standing gender imbalance in the traditional Korean music industry. However, this imbalance was less obvious among Korean Western classical musicians in the UK. For instance, five men and six women musicians contributed to the KCC House Concert in 2018. Since there are a large number of Korean Western classical musicians in London, I did not endeavour to interview them all, but it was not difficult to recruit interviewees within the frame of trying to maintain a gender balance. I selected three individuals based on the factors above and held a group interview with four students studying at the Royal Academy of Music. The experiences and agonies over their future choices as musicians living overseas provide a different viewpoint from others who I have talked to, as these students stand on the border between long-term and permanent residency in London. The most challenging task was to recruit pop musicians. Although there are a large number of pop musicians in Korea, finding Korean pop musicians in London proved difficult. During my research I found some, but most of these only had one-off performances and did not intend to continue their activities. Finally, I found two, one man and one woman, who have continuously been performing in London for an extended period. Apart from all these I have listed, I also met numerous people who actively participate in musical activities, and selected six people taking into account the various factors mentioned above. I conducted a formal interview at least once with everyone I selected, asking their background, how they began musical activities, what music meant to them, and goals, but I added or subtracted questions with flexibility as the flow of the conversation went on.

Participant observation has been a primary method for my research. According to James Spradley (1980, 58-62), participant observation can be divided into four aspects: passive, moderate, active, and complete. All of these were involved in my research. I was a passive observer in researching religious

traditions, Western classical and pop musics, but a moderate observer when taking part in events, and when collecting questionnaires or conducting interviews. For some events I actively participated as one of the organising staff or as a musician and/or teacher, and was thereby able to be closely involved in observing the whole process. Due to my previous experience as a traditional Korean musician and a music teacher, I could participate most fully in respect to traditional Korean music, particularly when this was geared toward children. I taught the *gayageum* (traditional Korean zither) to a group of elderly people, and Korean children's songs to the students of the London Korean Nationality School. Given my position as the person in charge of the music curriculum, I was able to lead the whole process as well as observe it.

In order to achieve an in-depth understanding of the cultural and musical behaviour of community members, I approached those actively participating in activities, focusing my observations on their purpose, reasons and aims for undertaking such activities. My Korean ethnicity, appearance and native language skills enabled me to become an insider to the community in a short period. In particular, not only my background as a trained traditional Korean musician, but also my role as a teacher for Korean children and the elderly in the community provided me with an advantage in endearing myself to the community. I do not remember being discriminated against due to my age or gender while conducting my research. Rather, thanks to the Korean/Confucian culture that respects teachers, even those who I did not teach called me 'teacher'. Thus, I was invited to cultural meetings and events, and was able to recruit interviewees in an open and straightforward way, while making observations of community dynamics from very close quarters. As I became more familiar with the members of the community, they became more responsive and engaged, and much of my fieldwork data came from casual conversations. In such cases, consent was always obtained, usually verbally, from the people involved in the conversations.

At the same time, drawing a clear line between my everyday life and fieldwork proved a challenge, since I was considered an 'insider' for those I studied, and the Korean community effectively became a 'home' for me. On some occasions, I have had to carefully sidestep people who made excessive requests in exchange for an interview, such as asking me for copies of interviews made

with others. I politely explained the impossibility of such actions for reasons of confidentiality, and was able to keep my stance as a researcher. In fact, however, such cases were extremely rare, and the advantages of being a 'native ethnographer' were much greater than any negative aspects of my inter-relationship with the diaspora. I believe, therefore, that my research has, in balance, benefited from my close relationships with people in the field.

Conducting research in relation to North Korean refugees is known to be a challenge, since most are defensive due to insecurity, their precarious status in the UK, and their low level of English proficiency. Jay Song and Steven Denney (2019) describes such challenges that they faced during their research with North Korean migrants. Specifically, younger female researchers were not treated as 'researchers' and experienced sexual harassment and verbal abuse by older North Korean men. However, this did not happen to me. Since I took on the role of music instructor for some of the activities to which North Koreans relate, many people recognised and treated me as 'teacher', as described above. In fact, some North Korean people have complained to me that many researchers only use them for their research, but not help them. However, they praised me for helping them teach music to the elderly and children. Also, they consider me as one of the Korean community members rather than a researcher who leaves after the study is finished. Thus, my relationship with North Korean community members enabled me to more actively engage with them. Also, even those not directly associated with the groups I worked with recognised me and became engaged with my project. This shows how important having a good relationship and creating a bond with people are in the field.

All formal interviews were conducted with the consent of the interviewees; recordings were kept confidential, and will be destroyed once this thesis has been completed. As for the involvement with children, I received the Enhanced Certificate of Comprehensive Background Checks from the Disclosure and Barring Service in August 2016, which enabled me to work as a school teacher. Also, at least one qualified teacher or adult was always present in class during my research. I utilise pseudonyms for some North Korean participants to protect them from any potential intimidation or repercussion; some have left family members in North Korea, and these might be subject to threats if identities are

revealed.

Although focusing on the Korean diaspora in the UK, my research has also investigated the Chinese and Japanese diasporas in the UK, utilising a comparative research method. China, Japan, and the two Korea are geographically the core parts of East Asia, sharing historical, cultural and economic ties (Prescott 2015b, 3). Matsuda and Mengoni point out that the three share some common cultural heritage, which distinguishes them from other nations and is based on aspects such as Confucian values, Daoist philosophy, and Buddhist religious practices (2016, 2). Richey notes how Confucianism has influenced personal and national values across East Asia (2015, 174); all three use or used Chinese characters in their writing, which can, it has been argued, shape people's logic and identity to an extent (Prescott 2015a, 70), and will at least have some impact, since language is a vital element in forming a social and cultural identity. Reischauer and Fairbank identify several cultural aspects of Korea and Japan that resemble those of China, although the three exhibit great distinctions in terms of daily lifestyle, housing, cuisine and more (1960, 396-98). With all of this in mind, what similarities and differences do East Asians in London have in terms of culture? How do they run their cultural activities while living abroad? Do they create new cultural forms in their new environment? Through the comparative analysis, I demonstrate how we can understand each community's different perspectives on cultural promotion.

There is an additional reason to include such comparison. This is because Koreans, both in the diaspora and at official levels in the government back in Seoul, routinely compare themselves and their activities with the Japanese and Chinese, both at home and in the diaspora, and with Japan and China as their geographical neighbours. For my research to be meaningful to Koreans both in the Korean peninsula and in the diaspora, then, it is important that I include such comparisons. In this respect, Japanese and Chinese cultural events and festivals in the UK are investigated in Chapter 4, their regular musical activities in Chapter 5, and activities of individual professional musicians in Chapter 6, along with each Korean counterpart.

#### **4. Overview of the thesis**

Unlike many ethnomusicological works which deal with one specific type of music, this research seeks to explore a wide range of genres in connection to the Koreans living in the UK. Thus, it is essential to present a comprehensive understanding of the general musical landscape of Korea before examining the culture of the community in the UK. Chapter 2 thus delineates the historical development process of each musical genre as well as musical terminology and usage, which is needed as a foundation for the discussions in later chapters. It is a well-known fact that Korea went through a period of turbulence in the 20th century which saw the acceptance of Western culture, but also the Japanese occupation and the Korean War. All of this has had a great influence upon Korean culture, with the music of a given time being reproduced, transformed or eliminated while, at the same time, new music has been introduced or created.

Chapter 3 provides a historical overview of the field. Although South and North Koreans now live in one community, they have developed two societies with diametrically opposed backgrounds, politics, and histories. I also document the earliest extant accounts in relation to Korean cultural activities in Britain. Utilising historical data, as well as interviews, this chapter offers a detailed history of Korean cultural work from the ground up, prior to 2014. I argue that the current Korean cultural scene did not develop all at once, but is the result of years of hard work and effort by numerous actors, many of whom faced a multitude of difficult situations.

In Chapters 4 and 5, the diverse Korean cultural activities being held in the varied spaces of the diasporic community are documented. The practical place occupied by Korean music can be divided into multiple levels, from private to public. I contextualise the spatial features and the purpose of the cultural activities, describing each mode of presentation, transmission, and participation. The chapters are divided in accordance with the purpose and frequency of activities. Chapter 4 focuses on Korean cultural festivals and events, while Chapter 5 centres on regular musical activities in the community. Given that not one specific genre, but several types of Korean music are utilised in the diaspora for distinct purposes, these chapters look into what types are used in each place and how each group expresses and cultivates their own identity by means of music.

To provide a comparison – which as stated above my Korean readers expect – the cultural events and activities of the Chinese and Japanese community are also examined to see how they exhibit different perspectives on cultural promotion, and how they lead cultural activities in distinctive ways.

Through vivid stories by individual Korean professional and amateur musicians, Chapter 6 presents their accounts of musical activities and migrant lives. Drawing on the narratives of professional musicians actively performing in three genres – traditional Korean, Western classical, and Korean pop music – this chapter presents different viewpoints on Korea and Korean music depending on the genre with which each individual musician associates. Delving into the life stories of amateur musicians, I highlight contrasting diasporic experiences and how music and musical activities have different personal significance to individuals. And, for the reasons stated above, not only Korean musicians, but a few Chinese and Japanese musicians active in London are also introduced in this chapter. Since they, or members of their ethnicity, started their music activities before Koreans, their rich experience may provide valuable lessons for Koreans who, in effect, have come to occupy space in the music of London after them.

My final chapter takes a comprehensive look at previous research, critiquing, first, the seven complexities of music and migration that are suggested as relevant by Baily and Collyer: the type of migration, spatial and cultural proximity, music and identity, transformations, music for an audience, therapeutic possibilities, and cohesive and divisive outcomes (2006, 172). Through this, the causality of the formation of the Korean community is explored as reflected by the musical activities I have documented. My thesis concludes by assessing the impact of music and cultural activities on individual immigrants, on the Korean community itself, and on its relationship with local residents.

The purpose of my thesis is threefold. One is as an ethnography to document and analyse the musical behaviour and dynamics of a specific diaspora. Documentation is important since it empowers unprivileged, undocumented groups (Zheng 2010, 8). Through this work, then, we are able to value – and understand – the culture of a group that has been overlooked. Second, though, this study is partly intended for a Korean audience both in Korea and in Britain. As such, firstly, it supplements Korean knowledge, secondly, suggests ways to

support immigrant cultural activities more effectively, and thirdly is designed to identify the ways in which the Koreans in Britain promote music, and how they can do so more successfully. These reasons have greatly influenced the way I write my thesis. Indeed, my interest in this topic began before my arrival in Britain, and was encouraged by my former professors in Seoul who helped me formulate my research on this topic precisely for these three reasons; as South Korea looks to develop its global presence, so there is a need to research the Korean diaspora abroad, and my thesis is intended to go some way towards providing the needed evidence-based data.

Third purpose is to develop a theory about the relationship between musical activities and their use in constructions of identity. Music-making is particularly significant for members of a diaspora since it both reflects and reproduces the cultural lives of migrants and refugees, and functions as a personal expression of social identity and as a significant domain of shared experience and communal activity, thereby separating migrants and refugees from others within the dominant community. This is much as Martin Stokes (1994, 4-5). Through my research, I hope to be able to contribute to the current and emerging discourse on diasporas and interrelated fields of study by inspecting the culture of migrants and refugees in a place distant from the homeland, putting forward a theoretical framework that is based on the core concepts held by the diaspora. I also hope my study will be able to provide insights into the study of musical concepts and behaviour among two distinct but related Korean immigrant groups, as well as showing how their cultural activities forms part of the multicultural fabric of today's Britain.



## CHAPTER 2

### The Musical Landscape of Koreans in London

Koreans engage in a broad spectrum of musical genres from other cultural backgrounds, including Western classical music, religious music, and popular music, as well as traditional Korean music. This raises the question of why these different types of music are significant to the culture of the Korean diaspora in London. Each given music has a unique personal significance for each person, and even the same piece of music can be interpreted differently by different people. In order to understand how each music interacts with human experience, Thomas Turino (1999) applies Peircian semiotic theory, which consists of three essential elements: the sign, object, and 'interpretant'. Within Peircian theory, the sign is a 'representamen', the object is what the sign stands for, and the 'interpretant' is what the sign creates in the observer. These three components mark distinct types of relationships, each part of a trichotomy: the first is the sign itself, the second is the relation between sign and object, and the third is the way a sign is interpreted as representing its object. Applying this theory to the traditional Korean music that North and South Koreans commonly share, it can be understood as a '*dicent-symbolic-legisign*' for Koreans, as traditional music is a general idea (legisign) that actually exists (dicent) and is generally perceived as a symbol (symbolic) by Koreans. However, Korean Christian music is a '*dicent-indexical-legisign*', since although Christian music is a general idea (legisign) that actually exists (dicent) in the same way as traditional music, it is personally received (indexical) in accordance with one's religious belief system. As such, each type of music has a different meaning to and influence on an individual or group, and eventually shapes a unique identity and culture among both individuals and groups. Hence, all the musics connected to Koreans need to be investigated to understand the culture of the Korean diaspora in London.

Prior to exploring the music of Koreans in the UK, I will delineate the full extent of Korean music. I do so for two reasons. First, although some terms relating to musical genres are commonly used in the same sense worldwide, there are many musical terms used only in Korea, which require specific knowledge in

order to understand Korean culture as a whole. Second, there are cases where there is different usage of a term in accordance with specific social and cultural circumstances. For instance, the term *gagok* can be understood through two alternative meanings: either as a vocal genre of traditional Korean music or as Korean art songs created in the 20th century influenced by Western music. In this chapter, I will chronicle Korean musical genres in general, with a focus on genres and types practised and performed among Koreans in the UK.

### 1. Traditional Korean music (*Gugak*)

Since the late nineteenth century, following the introduction of Western art music to Korea, traditional Korean music has been classified as *gugak* (lit. national music) as a counterpart of *seoyang eumak* (Western music), and as a subordinate concept of *eumak* (music) (B.W. Lee and Lee 2007, 1). *Gugak* incorporates several subgenres, yet Lee Hye-Ku appropriately categorised it into two types which are both highly regarded: emotionally restrained music, which is *jeong-ak* (ancient aristocratic music) and *a-ak* (ritual music), versus free, emotionally expressive music which includes *pansori* (epic storytelling through song), and *minyo* (folksong) (H.K. Lee 1981, 13). Amongst all traditional Korean music, the greatest focus will be on folk music, which is more common compared to other genres. Howard divides Korean folk music into two types according to its performers: amateur, such as folk percussion bands and those playing folk songs and, at the professional end, *pansori* and *sanjo* (lit. scattered melodies) (1999, 17). Both types are performed by members of the Korean diaspora, but I will specifically look at *minyo* and *samulnori* (Korean percussion quartet), as these represent the most favoured and widely performed genres among ordinary Koreans in London.

The term *minyo* (folksongs) was first introduced by the Japanese novelist Mori Ogai (1862-1922) as a translated German term, *Volkslied* (Hughes 1985, 12-3). It was brought to Korea in 1913 when Japanese researched Korean *minyo* during the occupation (Howard 2006d, 82). Although there are long-standing arguments over the categorisation of *minyo* (see J. Jung 1982; M. Han 1983; O.S. Kwon 1984; Chang 1984; H.J. Kim 1999; Bak 2012), today it is used as an umbrella term for all orally transmitted traditional folksongs. Regardless of classification, *minyo* can be said to be music that has been most closely associated with ordinary

Koreans in the past – considering the nature of lyrics it embraces themes of work, play, love, and so forth. Han identifies *minyo* as ‘the life of the masses, their hardships and their loves’ (1983, 63) and Howard gives a tripartite division: ‘folksongs exist for work, entertainment and death’ (1999, 18).

In the early 1930s, *sinminyo* (new folksongs) emerged, which added a popular twist to traditional folksong aesthetics and structures. However, the classification between *minyo* and *sinminyo* is ambiguous. Some pieces, such as ‘*Han obaengnyeong*/Around 500 years’ and ‘*Nodeulgangbyeon*/Riverside of Nodeul’, which are well-known by Koreans as folksongs, are classified as *sinminyo* by Korean scholars as they were composed during the colonial period (H.J. Kim 1999, 111; B.H. Lee 2009, 104). Whereas Maliangkay (2017, 69) identifies *sinminyo* as typically being ‘composed by individuals and performed in a relatively fast tempo to the harmonic accompaniment of Western instruments,’ but the composers are not always identifiable. Regardless of the arguments over categorisation, Finchum-Sung (2006, 11) determines that *sinminyo* was the first indigenous pop music of Korea, on the grounds that it was the first genre to reflect a mixture of foreign elements and traditional Korean aesthetics, and circulated to the public through radio and sound recordings.

Although many traditional and newer folksongs declined in popularity during modernisation, many still exist and are transmitted through music education and via the Intangible Cultural Property system in South Korea. Some Koreans in London enjoy folksongs by participating in musical activities such as learning *janggu* (double-sided hourglass-shaped drum), and *gayageum* (12-stringed zither).<sup>12</sup> They ‘proudly’ (as may told me) sing folksongs, as well as play traditional Korean instruments in the UK, which serve as means by which they retain their Korean identity in a remote place while representing and disseminating a positive image of typical traditional culture to the local host community.

*Arirang* is widely regarded as the national folksong, and has become a symbol of Korea. There are various versions depending on the region, composer, or performer, and the song in its current form developed during the early

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<sup>12</sup> See Chapter 5 for more on this.

twentieth century in Seoul based on '*Jeongseon arirang*' (B.H. Lee 1997, 119). Representative versions of the song became famous as a consequence of the movie *Arirang* by Na Un-gyu, released in 1926. In fact, *Arirang* was not only popular among Koreans, but was also the most familiar Korean song to Japanese at that time. Moreover, the Japanese contributed to a rise in its popularity by means of their technological and economic power (Atkins 2007, 646-47).

*Arirang* is sung not only by South Koreans, but also by North Koreans. Howard determined that 'it is one of [the] few folksongs retained largely without change in North Korea' (2006b, 72). Thus, it is often used in joint parades between North and South Korea in international events such as the Asian Games and the Olympics in place of the respective national anthems. These days, as Yu (2007, 262) has appropriately noted, *Arirang* is an expression of the two Koreas' hope for unification and a way of constructing one Korean identity. For this and other reasons, it is undeniable that *Arirang* holds a significant meaning for all Koreans worldwide, expressing a shared memory and history.

The practise of *samulnori* is, in contrast, a rather recent tradition, which has developed from big scale outdoor percussion band music and dance performance called *nong-ak* (farmers' music), also known as *pungmul* ('wind objects').<sup>13</sup> In 1978, four percussionists presented a condensed version of *pungmul* on a concert-hall stage, and so was born *samulnori* (Hesselink 2007, 100). The music is performed by four instruments: *ggwaenggwari* (small gong), *janggu* (double-sided hourglass shaped drum), *buk* (double-sided barrel shaped drum), and *jing* (big gong). Since its appearance, it has become the most familiar traditional genre among South Koreans, both as participants and audiences, from primary school groups to societies at university. In addition, the instruments are familiar as symbols of political and social movements in South Korea, specifically for those who were in their 20s in the 1980s. Students and labourers have used the instruments for demonstrations, or on the front lines of pro-democracy movements (Hesselink 2006, 213-14).

*Samulnori* has also been taught outside Korea by many *samulnori*

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<sup>13</sup> Although both indicate the same genre, the term *nongak* is controversial as it is believed that it is linked to the Japanese occupation, whereas *pungmul* is neutral and preferred among today's performers (Hesselink 2006, 15).

musicians, as well as by ethnomusicologists who have studied it at length. Howard claims that, 'arguably, it is the best received of Korean music genres abroad' (1999, 65). Appropriately, *samulnori* is regarded as one of the most favoured instrumental music genres of all traditional music for Koreans and enthusiasts all over the world (Howard 2015, 87). In Britain, in addition to its being taught at universities aimed at mainly non-Koreans, I worked with one professional percussionist who teaches *samulnori* in the Korean community, working with children of Korean heritage and seniors. Although there is no well-established *samulnori* group itself, some people have been learning it over a lengthy period of time and actively participate in performing it in Korean-related events.

Since Western music was introduced to Korea in the early twentieth century, it has influenced various fields including folk music. Composers began to write new Korean music pieces from the 1930s which understandably incorporate Western musical features. Byeon (2007) divides the history of Korean creative traditional music into three periods in accordance with representative composers and the style of their music: an initial stage (1939-1962), second stage (1963-1986), and third stage (1987 onwards). Kim Kisu (1917-1986) is a significant figure in the initial stage: his piece '*Hwanghwa mannyeon jigok*/Ten thousand years of imperialism,' written in 1939, is considered the first piece of creative Korean music (ibid., 172). In the second stage, numerous new pieces were composed by those trained by Kim, such as Yi Sanggyu (1944-2010), Yi Gangdeok (1928-2007), and Kim Huiho (b.1920). Particularly Hwang Byungki (1936-2018) and Lee Seongcheon (1936-2004) are highly regarded for developing idiomatic compositions for Korean instruments during this period (ibid. 176). Chou Wen-chung describes Hwang Byungki as a successful composer who contributed to nurturing East-West interaction (Chou 1983, 224), and Andrew Killick states that Hwang innovated an East-West musical confluence by embracing the Western concept of composition through an Asian medium (2013, 199). In the third stage, writing for a full-size orchestra became a trend and western functional harmony had a strong influence on new compositions. Yi Haesik (b.1943), Park Bum-hoon (b.1948), Paek Daeung (1943-2011), Hwang Uijong (b.1952), Kim Youngjae (b.1947) and others were important during this period of time.

New pieces since the 1960 have been called *sin-gugak* (new traditional music), in order to distinguish them from old pieces.<sup>14</sup> The term was officially replaced with *changjak gugak* (creative traditional music) by the National Gugak Centre (formerly the National Centre for Korean Traditional Performing Arts) in the 1970s. Since the mid-1980s, the term *fusion gugak* has often been used, specifically for contemporary pop-inspired traditional compositions. Byeon points out that New-Age style music, which usually includes traditional instruments as well as popular instruments, became very popular in the 1990s, with notable success being achieved by ensembles such as Puri and Seulgidung (2007, 182-183).

Both *changjak gugak* and *fusion gugak* share several features, yet there are opposing views on distinguishing the two terms. *Changjak gugak* is more commonly associated with academia, whereas *fusion gugak* is closely linked to pop culture (S.Y. Lee 2003, 194; Sohn 2009, 86). Song (2015, 43) uses *modern gugak* as an umbrella term for all of these, which 'not only means a variety of musical attempts ongoing in the field of *gugak*, but also includes all the creative works and performances combining or containing traditional elements, instruments, vocal techniques'. Although the term has long been the subject of discussion (see Killick 1991; Jin 1994; B.h. Lee 1994; S.Y. Lee 2004; Howard 2006b), no clear definition has been made upon which all scholars agree. I will hereafter employ the term *changjak gugak*, as this is most commonly used in the field.

Both *gugak* and *changjak gugak* have been widely performed in the UK. Since the Korean Cultural Centre UK was established in 2008, more diverse Korean music has increasingly been brought to London. Numerous professional music artists and ensembles have been invited from Korea to perform a range of professional *gugak* genres such as *pansori*, *sanjo* (solo instrumental folk-art genre), and court music as well as *changjak gugak*. Most professional genres, including *changjak gugak*, require a high level of playing skills and many hours of dedication to the craft. Thus, although *changjak gugak* is an enjoyable experience for the audience, there is great technical difficulty lying behind playing its pieces

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<sup>14</sup> Issues on contemporary gugak and solutions, Seoul National University Newspaper, 4 November 1968.

for non-professional musicians.

Many Koreans in the UK, however, also appreciate other types of *gugak*, as many pieces can be enjoyed and played by anyone with less effort, especially as regards folksongs. If *gugak* presents a typical traditional Korean national and ethnic image, *changjak gugak* is identified with a more modern and contemporary scene still in progress in Korea. Therefore, it can be said that various aspects of *gugak* are present and appreciated in the UK, despite the vast physical distance from Korea.

## **2. Christian music (*Gidokgyo eumak*)**

Music is used by diverse religions for being ‘the most effective sign of the human spirit and its transformative capacities’ (Sullivan 1997, 5). In particular, it has been regarded as an important element in Christianity to enrich theology (Begbie 2000), spiritual experience (Boyce-Tillman 2001), to create an ‘imagined community’ (Hartje-Doll 2013), and so on. Korean churches in London use music in services; they typically sing Korean songs of praise and mostly play contemporary Christian music during services, although each church has its own established form. In order to understand the culture of Korean Christianity as a whole, I will first look into the history and process of the development of Christianity and Christian music in Korea.

The first Christianity introduced to Korea was Catholicism in the late eighteenth century through China. Some Catholic missionary publications written in Chinese were disseminated among scholars of the Realist School of Confucianism (Baker 2008, 64). Thereafter, Catholics were persecuted and Catholicism proscribed from 1801 to 1886 (when the Joseon Dynasty and France established a diplomatic treaty), although it survived via the efforts of Korean congregations. During its process of naturalisation in Korea, the Catholic Church assimilated traditional Korean cultural elements, including ancestral rites. In particular, the Korean version of the Catholic funeral ceremony, *yeondo*, has a unique characteristic of reflecting traditional funeral procedures in combination with traditional Korean melodies. The Catholic Bishops’ Conference of Korea published *Hanguk Cheonjugyo Seongeumak Jichim* (Regulation for Korean

Catholic Music) in 2008, referring to the *Musicam Sacram*<sup>15</sup> proclaimed in 1967 by the Vatican Council. Since then, the designated music of the Korean Catholic church has been closely regulated, and it is rare to find differences between the music employed by individual churches. The music of the Korean Catholic church in London is almost identical to that heard in churches in Korea.

In the late nineteenth century, Protestantism was introduced by European and American missionaries, and has since held great sway over Korea. Paik Jong Koe (1998) points out the four contributions it made to the formation of Korean society in the early twentieth century: the progress of Korean civilisation through education; the realisation of individual rights; the development of a work-ethic; and the establishment of a healthy family life. Above all, introducing Western education had a huge impact. The missionaries, mostly from the United States, established mission schools, which taught several subjects, including Western hymns for evangelism, and published hymn books. Particularly, hymns facilitated literacy. Clark notes that 'many of the Christians in Korea first had their interest in the Christian Gospel' (1932, 143). Also, in the early twentieth century, many Koreans actually learned how to read Korean through hymn books (D.N. Clark 1986, 32; J.S. Hong 1995, 374-375; K.B. Min 2005, 210-211).

*Chanmiga* (Songs of Praise) was the first Korean Christian hymn book, published in 1892 by Georgy Heber Jones, a Methodist minister, and Louise C. Rothweiler, a Methodist, containing 27 hymn texts translated into Korean. Reissued in 1895, it expanded to 81 hymns. In 1894, *Chanyangga* (Songs of Praise) was published by the Presbyterian Horace G. Underwood containing 117 hymns in Western staff notation, including seven with lyrics by Koreans. Besides these, many hymn books were published by each protestant body until eventually *Tongil Chansongga* (Integrated Songs of Praise) was issued in 1983 with 558 hymns for use in all Korean Protestant churches. This was the first use of the term '*chansongga*' as the standardised term for all three earlier terms – *chanmiga*, *chanyangga*, and *chansongga* – and can be literally translated as '*songs of praise*'. This collection was updated with the new title *Isibil segi sae chansongga* (New

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<sup>15</sup> Instruction on music in the liturgy:

[http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist\\_councils/ii\\_vatican\\_council/documents/va\\_t-ii\\_instr\\_19670305\\_musicam-sacram\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/va_t-ii_instr_19670305_musicam-sacram_en.html), accessed 6 April 2019.



Songs of Praise of the 21st Century) in 2006.

There were not only hymns, but also different styles of praise songs included. This diversity was the result of early missionaries publishing hymn books in the early introduction stage of Christianity without distinguishing the various forms (Mun 2011, 450). Hong Jung Soo (1995, 380-81) is arguably responsible for classifying hymns from early books into four types: directly translated hymns from the US and the UK; pieces with Korean lyrics using European folksong melodies; pieces with Korean lyrics using traditional Korean folksongs, *changga*, and popular songs; and pieces with lyrics in Korean incorporating US or UK hymn melodies. This categorisation is useful in indicating the various periods of and the development process of Korean hymns. However, most European folksongs, including 'Amazing Grace,' were first introduced to Korea not as folksongs but as hymns. Thus, it is difficult to justify the validity of Hong's second type. These days, the term '*chansongga*' is generally used to refer to traditional hymns (Mun 2011, 449) which have 'unison melodies of Western origin and translated texts, sung above a simple harmonic framework ideally suited to being played on a harmonium' (Howard 2016a, 632).

Traditionally, churches did not allow popular culture such as music and dance in worship, being aware of the problem of 'hype and emotional manipulation' (Ward 2005, 179). However, some churches decided to incorporate popular culture into worship in line with changing times and customs, which Porter explains as 'cosmopolitanism' (2017, 153). Christian popular music was also introduced into Korean Protestantism and led to the term *bogeum seongga*, for music based on secular idiom, translated as 'gospel songs' (Gospelservice 2013). Although gospel songs vary the musical features from the original genre, it has a peculiar style originating in the United States and shares certain musical characteristics (Tallmadge 1968, 219). Again, Christian popular music sharing similar Western tonality, chord progressions, and instrumentation could be said to be gospel songs, according to some more evangelical definitions (M.M. Ingalls, Nekola, and Mall 2013). In the 1960s, such music was first introduced to Korea under the name Contemporary Christian Music (CCM). It is difficult to draw a clear distinction between the usage of terms in *bogeum seongga* and CCM, but the former is a comprehensive concept and includes the latter.

Regarding musical features specifically, *bogeum seongga* is simpler, easier to appreciate, and shorter, facilitating others in joining in to sing along. CCM is more complicated and mostly uses the same musical structures as pop songs. Since its introduction to Korea, CCM has spread through media and social missionary groups, and quickly became popular. It is utilised in most Korean churches, particularly at the beginning of services led by a 'praise team' of singers and accompanying (electric) instruments in a sing-along conducted in a concert-like manner (Boone 2013, 20). Indeed, many churches highlight the role of the praise team as creating a religious atmosphere through music.

In the 1980s, Protestantism grew rapidly in Korea. The Protestant population in Korea was 623,072 in 1960, but increased more than 10 times, to 6,489,282, by 1985, and this is related to the increasing number of large and mega-churches built in Korea through the 1980s (Y.G. Hong 2000, 100).<sup>16</sup> There are 15 mega-churches today, and more than half of them are classified as charismatic churches (ibid., 101-103) emphasising gifts and manifestations of the Holy Spirit (Butler 2016, 607). In charismatic churches, the theology and practice of worship is centred around music, as it generate 'a feeling of togetherness,' and occupies 'a particular space in charismatic spirituality,' leading to 'a personal encounter with God' (Ward 2005, 198-99).

In the last decades of the twentieth century, a new style of service, Praise and Worship, was introduced to the US. The music used in Praise and Worship is more akin to pop than to traditional hymns, employing simple melodies and often accompanied by a band (Cusic 2010, 347). Praise and Worship was brought to Korea in the 1970s under the name of *Gyeongbaewa chanyang*. Unlike traditional Christian services in which emotional expressions were restrained, this style of worship encouraged singing, clapping and loud prayers as fundamental parts of worship and praise (Y.S. Park 2000, 8-9). However, the popularity was attained on the back of a specific service, the Praise and Worship organised in 1987 at the Onnuri Church which is one of the mega-churches (Y.S. Park 2000, 25; D. Yang 2016, 178). Since then, other mega-churches have actively accepted the Praise and Worship style, as it leads to a climactic moment of 'singing in the Spirit, in

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<sup>16</sup> He defines large churches as having more than 1,000 adult worshippers attending Sunday services, and mega-churches as having more than 10,000.

which audience and artists eventually move into spontaneous sounds of adoration' (Pollard 2013, 41).

Alongside the popularity of Praise and Worship, the CCM market in Korea has grown at an incredible rate since the 1970s and reached its peak in the 1990s. It is a characteristic of charismatic churches to establish 'a closer connection between the sacred worship of the service and the activities of daily life' (Porter 2017, 83). Thus, listening to Christian music in their daily lives, such as at home or while driving a car, is common for Korean Christians. Many CCM singers, as well as pop musicians, have released albums and several CCM competitions are held every year. Chae Young Kyu (2018) asserts that although the current market has somewhat plateaued due to structural changes in the recording industry, the propensity to consume CCM is still very much alive.

### **3. Western art music (*Seoyang eumak*)**

The first introduction to Western classical music in Korea was during the 1700s, when books were written by several scholars describing their journeys abroad. However, these mostly contained nothing but commentaries or descriptions. *Cheongjanggwon jeonso* (Complete Works of *Cheongjanggwon*), written by Yi Duk-moo in 1795, was the first to explain basic theories of Western music. The first appearance in practice was military bands. The German musician Franz Eckert (1852-1916), who had trained the Japanese navy band for twenty years, was invited by King Gojong as a teacher and conductor of the new Korean military band, and arrived in Korea in February, 1901 (Ahn 2005, 19). The band had 51 students and often held its rehearsals and performances in Pagoda Park in Seoul, playing marching music as well as Western classical music. They prepared 54 pieces of music through to 1904, including the national anthems of various countries and dance music items (ibid., 23). However, considering the band belonged to the royal court, their influence may have been limited to a small number of people – the royal family and their guests.

The biggest influence of Western art music in Korea came from Protestant missionary work that began in the late nineteenth century. Between 1885 and 1909, 39 missionary schools opened across Korea (K.B. Min 2005, 201-202), and these taught hymns, largely based on Western melodies though with lyrics

translated into Korean. In particular, Ewha School organised a student choir, which is considered to be the first Korean choir, and held their first public performance at a graduation ceremony at the school in 1908, singing 'Halleluiah' from Handel's *Messiah*.<sup>17</sup> Later, they performed at several events, singing a diverse range of Western songs in both Korean and English, such as 'Jongdalsae/Skylark', 'Oh Italia', and 'Saviour, again to Thy dear name'. Their performances were hugely popular, as cultural events such as concerts were rare at that time. The school later established Ewha Womans University in 1910 and opened a Department of Music in 1925; it was the first such university to teach Western art music in Korea. Although Yonsei University did not have a music department at that time, hymns and choir music had been taught by Mrs. Becker since 1917, followed by Kim Young-hwan (1893-1978), who joined in 1918. Hyun Jae-myung (1902-1960) was appointed music professor in 1929, and soon organised a student orchestra and choir. The orchestra held regular concerts twice a year for ten years from 1930 (B.S. Song 2007, 669-70).

The first Korean musicians who played Western classical music were born between 1884 and 1919, and included Kim Young-hwan, Hong Nan-pa (1893-1941), Hyeon Jae-myeong, Ahn Eak-tai (1906-1965), and Park Tae-jun (a.k.a Travis Jones Park, 1900-1986). They can be considered to be the first generation in this field. Ahn Choong-sik (2005, 175-78) records the name of 52 musicians who were active at the time. According to Ahn, all of them, apart from Yi Sang-jun (1884-1948), studied music abroad, in Japan, the USA, Germany, or Italy, with most returning to Korea and holding concerts or teaching students at local music schools.

From 1910, Western classical music concerts began to be held in public places including the YMCA, Seoul Town Hall, and the auditorium of Paichai School. Korean Professional musicians, as well as Western musicians, held performances ranging from recitals to orchestras. During the Japanese occupation, three orchestras were founded: *Gyeongseong Bangsong Gwanhyeonakdan* (JODK

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<sup>17</sup> *Hanguk choechoui koreoseu ihwa geulli keulleop iyagi* (the story of 'Ewha Glee Club' that South Korea's the first chorus), [https://blog.naver.com/the\\_ewha/20129156291](https://blog.naver.com/the_ewha/20129156291), accessed 22 March 2021.

Orchestra)<sup>18</sup> in 1928, *Gyeongseong Gwanhyeonakdan* (Gyeongseong Orchestra) in 1934, and the Seoul Broadcasting Orchestra in 1936. In addition, there was an organisation that facilitated the needs of musicians, called the *Joseon Eumak Hyeophoe* (The Chosun Music Association). However, all musical activities at that time were tightly controlled by the Japanese, whose central aim was to govern colonial Koreans and to boost the morale of the Japanese army (T.U. No and Yi 1991, 334-35).

During that time, a new genre, *gagok*, an art song influenced by German *Lieder*, emerged, based on *changga*. The term *changga* (唱歌) is the Korean pronunciation of the Japanese *shōka*, which means, in a narrow sense, songs specifically taught at schools for children and youths, composed or imported but based on general Western musical idioms from the time of the Enlightenment in the early twentieth century (Y.H. Bae 2008). In a broad sense, *changga* was created by combining several Korean singing genres from the beginning of the 20th century, embracing *gagok*, *gayo* (popular songs), and *dong-yo* (children's songs) (Y.J. Shin 2009, 121). Suh Wu-suk considers that *gagok* has three different aspects that differ from *gayo* (1985, 200-205). First, its motif is a solemn musical expression of emotion accompanied by poetic lyrics. Second, in terms of singing techniques, exaggerated vibrato for sensational effects is avoided in *gagok*. Third, *gagok* performers hail mostly from the upper and middle classes and often have formal musical training. These are some reasons why *gagok* is considered to be representative of art songs, rather than popular songs.

The song '*Bongseonhwa*/Garden balsam' is regarded as the first *gagok* due to its artistic characteristics (G. Lee 1992, 15; Na 2003, 18). '*Bongseonhwa*' was composed in 1920 by Hong Nan-pa with lyrics by Kim Hyung-jun, and is still regarded as one of the most popular *gagok* songs in Korea. In the 1930s, several *gagok* were composed by Koreans and many Korean vocalists actively performed and recorded these. Thus, *gagok* should rightly be considered to be a distinctive genre. Its songs include '*Geu jip ap*/In front of the house', '*Seon-guja*/Pioneer', '*Gagopa*/Want to go', '*Jebi*/Swallow', and many more, composed during that period and which are still popular today. Although *gagok* faced a downturn in

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<sup>18</sup> Gyeongseong Broadcasting Station was known as the JODK due to its call sign.

popularity in the 1950s due to the social predicament faced by Korea, it became popular again in the 1960s. Some *gagok* pieces have been taught at secondary schools, so ordinary Koreans are accustomed to the music.

After liberation from colonial Japanese rule, the Western art music scene in Korea expanded with the help of several orchestras and chamber ensembles, and through the introduction of Western opera. This opened up a whole new world of opportunity for young musicians. Providing a training route, the Gyeongseong Conservatoire (*Gyeongseong Eumak Jeonmun Hakgyo*) was established in 1945 by Hyun Jae-myung, and the following year the school was incorporated into Seoul National University, the premier university in Korea. It was involved in starting a national music competition for high school students which has run ever since 1948, and the number of national music competitions has also gradually increased. Since the 1960s, Korean musicians began to perform on the world stage, such as Chung Myung-wha (b.1944), Paik Kun-woo (b.1946), Chung Kyung-wha (b.1948), Chung Myung-whun (b.1953), Jo Sumi (b.1962), Sarah Chang (b.1980), and Han-na Chang (b.1982). Many have now achieved recognition by winning international competitions.

Western art music's influence has spread to the general Korean population. Its appeal grew rapidly in the late twentieth century, when many urban families owned a piano at home and sent their children to a private music academy. One possible reason behind this could be the influence of Christianity. As Harkness determined in his research, the vast majority of Western vocal musicians are Christian and there is a network which connects them via churches (2014, 178). Those in this environment are naturally exposed to Western music and can participate in church musical activities from an early age. Another incentive is the opportunities that being proficient in music can give; it serves as an indication of an individual's means for advanced education and promotes one's status. Hwang asserts that 'since "the West" became a powerful status marker during the shift to modern Korea and since Korea's long-held reverence for education readily equated education with status, Western art music with its "Western" origin and with its connection to the institutionalized educational infrastructure became a means to uplift one's status and was utilized as a convenient status marker in the "yangbanization" process that insured its wide spread dissemination' (2009, 193).

In line with the US, Germany, and Italy, Britain has been a favoured destination for Korean music students studying abroad. A large number attend music conservatoires such as the Royal Academy of Music, the Royal College of Music, Guildhall, and Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance. A persuasive factor in studying abroad is the chance to study at what is considered the very birthplace of Western art music. After finishing their courses, most students return to Korea, either by choice or being forced to do so when visas expire, and only a few stay in the UK to continue their musical careers.

#### **4. Children's songs (*Dong-yo*)**

The term *dong-yo* was first introduced in the children's magazine *Eorini* (Children) in 1923.<sup>19</sup> The occurrence of *dong-yo* dates back to the 1900s. From 1905, teachers were forced to teach *changga*, Japanese children's songs, in classes, using Japanese music textbooks *Simsang Sohak Changga* (Simsang Elementary School Songs) and *Sinpyeon Gyoyuk Changgajip* (New Collection of Educational School Songs) during the protectorate years (1905-1910) (K.C. Min 2002b, 19). Upon annexation in 1910, the Japanese authorities reformed Korean schools to conform to the Japanese educational system as a part of the colonisation policy, and published *Botong Gyoyuk Changgajip* (Common Educational School Songs) for use in music classes. Throughout the period of military rule (1910-1919), cultural rule (1920-1929) and wartime mobilisation (1930-1944), a number of songbooks were published. Although a few songs in these were in Korean, most were in Japanese, as per the educational goals of that time, pursuing an enlightenment and emotional reformation, and pushing the use of Japanese language (M. Park 2015, 283). Despite oppression from the Governor-General of Chosen – the chief administrator of the Japanese colonial government in Korea – Korean private schools also taught *changga*, but at times with lyrics about patriotism, independence, and resistance to Japanese imperialism (Y.H. Han 2004, 31-33). Lee Dong Soon (2011a, 90) has determined that children were the main subjects of the enlightenment of Korean nationalism during those dark ages.

*Dong-yo* was also influenced by Christian education and hymns. American

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<sup>19</sup> *Eorini*1/1, 1923.

missionaries had built schools and taught Korean students based on the Western educational system. Ewha School started to teach *changga* as a separate subject for students from 1891. In 1914, Ewha Prep School was established as an affiliated school by Charlotte G. Brownlee, and it published *Yuhui Changgajip* (Collection of Playing Songs) for use by children. From 1925, a new type of *dong-yo* emerged written by composers such as Hong Nan-pa, Park Tae-jun, and Yoon Geuk Young (D.S. Lee 2011, 88). *Dong-yo* evolved into two distinct forms: *jeollae dong-yo* (traditional children's songs) and *changjak dong-yo* (creative children's songs),<sup>20</sup> which were distinguished in the children's magazine *Sinsonyeon* (new boy) in 1925. The lyrics of both included references to children's lives and feelings, with traditional children's songs being handed down orally to children with traditional musical elements, while creative children's songs were created by composers using Western styles. For instance, '*Duggeoba duggeoba*/Toad, toad', '*Parang-sae*/Blue bird', and '*Ggok ggok sumeora*/Hide well' were traditional children's songs, and songs such as '*Bandal*/Half-moon', '*Oppa saenggak*/Think of elder brother' and '*Gohyang-ui bom*/Spring of hometown' were representative of creative children's songs at that time.

After liberation from colonialism, the first national textbook for music was *Chodeung Noraechaek* (Elementary Songbook), published in 1946 by the US army military government in Korea. The second edition was published in 1948, and was the first Korean government-issued music textbook; it included many new songs (Y.H. Han 2004, 101). After the Korean War, the South Korean government began to publish national textbooks, and between 1958 and 2019 it made 11 revisions to the national curriculum, over time adopting elements reflecting to historical development, and social and cultural shifts (E.J. Kim 2017, 50). Songs in the music textbooks published between the 1960s and 1980s include songs relating political and ethical messages which touch on patriotism, anti-communism, and the *Saemaul Undong* (lit. New village movement)<sup>21</sup>. Since the 1990s, broadcasting companies have held contests for new children's songs, and prize-winning songs have been included in school textbooks (ibid. , 40-41).

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<sup>20</sup> *Sinsonyeon* (new boy) 3/7, 1925.

<sup>21</sup> The government-led movement launched by former president Park Chung-hee in 1971 to improve and modernise rural communities.



In recent times, there has been a movement to encourage all Korean children to learn children's songs from their mothers from an early age, and to formally educate children in *dong-yo* in music classes from nursery and primary school onwards. In recent textbooks, it is rare to find political lyrics; rather, the primary themes include nature, works of fiction, and beautiful expressions within the Korean language. In terms of genre, textbooks contain both traditional and creative children's songs. In particular, traditional ones have been considered important as they express the sentiments and observations of children (H.I. Kang 2005, 281) and are passionate about what it means to be Korean (D.S. Lee 2011, 86). Music teachers also agree that students should begin to learn traditional songs at an early age (H.C. Hong 2006, 544). Such a natural exposure to Western musical idioms from an early age through music education acquaints children with Western music and internalises familiarity with it (Ahn 2005, 165).

*Dong-yo* has been taught and enjoyed in Korea for a long period, because of their educational and social benefits, as well as among overseas Korean education through Korean Saturday schools. Even though children are theoretically able to learn children's songs online with the development of the Internet, it is almost impossible without direct face-to-face guidance from adults to do so, since online resources tend to expose children to popular music, rather than children's songs. Thus, it is vital that *dong-yo* continue to be taught face-to-face, particularly to immigrant children, to effectively transmit knowledge regarding ethnic identity. For this reason, I will investigate the practice of *dong-yo* in the Korean community in London in Chapter 5.

### **5. Korean popular songs (*Gayo*, *daejung gayo*, and *daejung eumak*)**

With the influx of Western music in the early twentieth century, Korean popular music also developed. The history of popular songs in Korea can be largely divided into five periods according to trends and the social influence: Japanese influence (1910-1945); American influence (1945-1960s); the Revitalizing Reforms system period (1960s-1980s); the advent of Korean hip-hop music and the establishment of K-pop (1990s); and the Korean Wave, as it moved beyond the Korean boundary (2000s onwards).

The first era began with *changga*, which were originally for school use but

which then broadened to reach the general public as ‘popular’ *changga*. Some consider *changga* as a genre as marking the beginning of Korean popular song, due to its completely different musical elements from previous styles of Korean music (G.S. Lee, Kim, and Min 2002, 113-15; J.S. Lee 2014, 246). It was prevalent during the 1920s and developed into an independent genre in the 1930s. Since then, *sinminyo* and *trot* (*teuroteu* in RR.) have been more central. The latter term is known to be derived from foxtrot, the rhythm of a Western dance genre. In fact, foxtrot was introduced to Japan first – in a 4/4 meter – and combined with the Japanese pentatonic *yonanuki* minor pentatonic (A-B-C-E-F) and major (C-D-E-G-A) folk scales. This combination created a popular genre, *enka*, which was passed on to Korea to become *trot*. Due to its background as a genre rooted in Japanese music, *trot* has been the subject of controversy (Pak 2006, 62-64). Nonetheless, even in recent times, it remains a favoured genre among Koreans as it reflects their sentiment, and in this it stands in stark contrast to *sinminyo*, which has not been so popular. For this reason, Lee Young Mee asserts that *trot* embraces the suffering and oppression of its time, and that *sinminyo* did not reflect a modernised world, but rather looked back to a Korea of the past (2006, 8). This could be one reason for the continuous popularity of *trot*, but I consider its musical style, which includes rich harmonic tones from Western popular music, would have been more attractive to people in the 1930s and since, as it allowed a wider range of emotional expression compared to traditional music.

After liberation in August 1945, Russian and US military forces were supposed to govern Korea according to a temporary division until Korea was able to establish its own government. During this short period, Korea had to come to terms with the remnants of Japanese occupation and build a new society. The US military played a transitional role, transferring control to the independent government of Korea in September 1948. However, due to the outbreak of the Korean War in 1950, and the nature of the ensuing armistice in 1953, the US military needed to remain in Korea. In 1951, the American Forces Korean Network (AFKN) radio station was launched, enabling American soldiers to listen to news, announcements and music from their home country. After the ceasefire in 1953, AFKN still remained to serve US forces in Korea, and expanded into television and film from 1957. This medium connected with the growing

popularity of dance music among Koreans, a popularity which included tango, rumba, and blues. Cabaret became a popular place for the young,<sup>22</sup> and famous department stores including Hwashin, Midopa, and Donghwa opened cabaret shows for their younger customers. Before the 1960s, there was little independent alternative culture for the young generation, but the availability of American culture hugely attracted Korean students due to its hedonistic individualism, dynamism, and expressiveness (Maliangkay 2006, 23). Kim Hyung Chan notes that American culture was a breakthrough for the younger generation at the time as it allowed them to deviate from the Japanese-influenced culture represented by *trot* that was typically reminiscent of the painful and depressing history of colonial occupation (2004b, 33).

In 1956, the American United Service Organization began to organise shows that in Korean became known as the *Mipalgunsho* (lit. eighth army show). These formed the basis of the first Korean entertainment agency known as the *Hwayang heung-eop* (Korea Entertainment Agency Association (KEAA)<sup>23</sup>). Due to the success of KEAA, other agencies were soon founded, such as Universal, Samjin, and Daeyeong, and the entertainment industry expanded rapidly. The first generation of Korean pop musicians emerged: Patti Kim, Shin Jung-hyun, Kim Hee-gap, Cho Yong Pil, and others. These typically made their debuts through *Mipalgunsho*, and they now reside as legends in Korean pop music history. In addition to individual singers, several girl groups emerged who modelled themselves on the American group Andrew Sisters. These included the massively popular Jeogori Sisters, Kim Sisters, and the Pearl Sisters. In particular, the Jeogori Sisters are regarded as the first girl group in Korea, and the Kim Sisters are known as the first Asian girl group to be successful in the US.

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<sup>22</sup> Kim Hyung Chan, “*Lokgwa maekju geurigo saiki jomyeong...70nyeondae jeolmeunideurui haebanggu* (Rock, beer, and club light...a haven for the 70s’ young people”, <http://www.munhwa.com/news/view.html?no=2013071901033130025002>, accessed 10 October 2020.

<sup>23</sup> *Gilgeori inmunhakdo* (Scholar of Street Humanities), “*Choecho-ui yeonye gihoeksawa lakbaendeu-ui sangnyuk* (The introduction of the first entertainment management agency and rock bands)”, <http://m.post.naver.com/viewer/postView.nhn?volumeNo=9920175&memberNo=2301197&vType=VERTICAL>, accessed 10 October 2020.

Due to the high demands and ever-increasing popularity of pop music, KBS radio began airing Western pop music shows once a week for 30 minutes, titling the show *Geumju-ui hiteu peoreideu* (This week's hit parade). Several other broadcasting stations also launched pop programmes in the 1960s (Maliangkay 2006, 30). During that time, twist dance fever, as well as Western pop music in general, swept through Korea with songs such as '*Noran shasseu-ui sanai*/The man in the yellow shirt', and '*Kidari miseuta kim*/Lanky Mr Kim' still being remembered.

Music appreciation clubs emerged as a new cultural trend among the young in the 1960s, *Di chuene* (De chène), *Sse sibong* (C'est si bon), and La Scala being examples that were well-known. By simply paying a small entrance fee, visitors could have one drink and listen to music throughout the night (C. No 1994, 39; Sun 1996, 32). Most clubs had a DJ and each had its own especially themed programmes, such as twist dance parties, music contests, open mic stages and so forth. The first generation of modern Korean folk music singer-songwriters started their careers in such clubs, going on to become celebrities (H.C. Kim 2004a). Among them were Yun Hyung-ju, Song Chang-shik, and Cho Young-nam.

Acoustic guitar music emerged in 1964 and became fashionable through the 1970s (H.C. Kim 2004c, 34). It was also called *pokeu song* ('folksongs'), since they were influenced heavily by American modern folk.<sup>24</sup> The first *pokeu song* festival was held at the YMCA in 1970 and marked the starting point of the acoustic guitar boom, and this led to other festivals such as *Chunggaeguri saundeu* (Sound of tree frog) and the *Namiseom song festival* (Nami-island song festival) (ibid., 35-37). There are two opinions as to the reasons for the popularity of acoustic guitar songs: the first is due to its participatory nature (O. Hwang 2006, 37), and the other is the popularity of an untrained, natural voice (D.L. Kwon 2012, 163). In line with a fashion for acoustic guitar, music bands were also popular. The first Korean rock band, Keyboys, released their first album in 1970, even though many of its songs were actually covers of American pop.

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<sup>24</sup> For a discussion of which, see *pokeusong* (Folksongs) in *Han-guk minjok munhwa daebaekwasajeon* (Encyclopedia of Korean Culture), <http://encykorea.aks.ac.kr/Contents/SearchNavi?keyword=포크송&ridx=0&tot=3>, accessed 10 October 2020.

In the early 1960s, politics in South Korea were chaotic. In 1963, Park Chung-hee staged a coup and established a military regime in the name of clearing away the remnants of Japanese colonialism, acting against communism, and encouraging economic reconstruction. In the same year, the Korean Broadcasting Ethics Committee was established and the South Korean government started to censor culture and arts. During the 1960s, Japanese and North Korean cultural pieces were the main targets for censorship. Censorship intensified under the political ideology of the *Yusin* regime (Revitalizing Reform regime) begun in 1972. Although acoustic guitar music was the product of influence from the American folksong movement, most Koreans remained apathetic towards the political issues of the day. Singers such as Kim Min-gi, Yun Hyung-ju, Kim Se-hwan, and Yang Hee-eun actively expressed their political opinions in their music, and many of their songs, including '*Achim iseul*/Morning dew,' were prohibited from being broadcast. Despite censorship, their music was routinely circulated among university students, and Kim Min-gi became a cultural and political figure as an anti-government activist (O. Hwang 2006, 40).

Western pop was also subject to censorship. The government banned a large number of Western songs for the reason that they would corrupt minds and displayed decadence, or even censored them without any reason. For instance, 'Bohemian Rhapsody' by Queen was banned since its lyrics related to murder,<sup>25</sup> and 'Bad Girls' and 'Hot Stuff' by Donna Summer were prohibited due to their lascivious lyrics.<sup>26</sup> Despite strict controls, pirated versions of records, known as *bbaekpan* in Korean, were actively distributed, not least since the public preferred foreign pop songs over Korean pop (C.G. Kwon 2015, 217).

The military regime continued from Park Chung Hee to Chun Doo-hwan. In the 1980s, several democracy movements developed and music took on a

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<sup>25</sup> Kim Jihye, "*Sarin myosahae geumjigok? Bohemian lapsodi, pagyeok gasa-ui uimineun* (Prohibited for portraying murder? Bohemian Rhapsody, the meaning of the shocking lyrics)", [http://sbsfune.sbs.co.kr/news/news\\_content.jsp?article\\_id=E10009277488](http://sbsfune.sbs.co.kr/news/news_content.jsp?article_id=E10009277488), accessed 10 October 2020.

<sup>26</sup> Choi Min Ji, "*Samang donaseommeo nugu? 16bun 50cho pagyeokgok balpyo* (Who is the late Donna Summer? Released an extraordinary song of 16 minute and 50 seconds)", <http://www.tvreport.co.kr/227447>, accessed 28 August 2019.

pivotal role in them. Singing clubs were organised in universities, and collections containing protest songs were published by many groups. Songs such as '*Bbae-atgin deuredo bomeun oneunga*/Will spring come even if taken away?', '*I sesang eodin-ga-e*/Somewhere in the world', '*Owolui nora*/Song of May', and '*Imeul wihan haengjin-gok*/Marching for the beloved one' were disseminated in this way. As a consequence, Korea gradually developed into a democratic country. Although in autumn 1987 Roh Tae-woo was elected as 13th President of South Korea through presidential election, not through a coup, he could not be free from the fact that he had participated in putting down the Gwangju pro-democracy movement as a general of the Korean army back in 1980. In 1992, with the election of the non-military president Kim Young Sam, South Korea became a true democratic country. Kang Youngmi writes that the 1980s Song Movement elicited actions to resist the undemocratic political system through social solidarity (2018, 323). Hwang states that, 'under the banner of the Song Movement, the cultural climate changed' (2006, 47). Lee Geonyong (1990, 112, 124-26) criticises 'the music for movement', but emphasises the importance and power of music in reflecting social reality. As such, pop music had a significant role in Korean social change during the 1980s.

Since the 1990s, the Korean pop music scene rapidly expanded, subdivided and diversified. Howard argues that it was pop songs which most contributed to the domestic music industry, rather than foreign songs during the 1990s (2006a, 82). The following paragraphs delineate five aspects of this 1990s phenomenon. First, musical genres had always been diverse and a distinctive Korean style of pop music emerged mixing various genres. The popularity of ballads from the 1980s, represented by Yu Jae-ha, Lee Sun-hee, and Lee Moon-se, continued throughout the 1990s up to the emergence of late 1990s artists such as Shin Seung-hun, Yun Jong-shin, and Lee Seung-hwan. Seo Taiji and Boys, the most sensational figures in the Korean pop music industry of the early 1990s, set a trend for hip-hop and rap. As well as their debut songs, '*Nan Arayo*/I Know,' all the songs on their first album, including '*Hwangsangsogui geudae*/You in Your Dream' and '*Ijeneun*/Now,' were breakthrough successes. Their body of work cannot be defined within one genre alone, as they mixed genres such as funk, rock, pop, techno, metal and more. In their song '*Hayeoga*', they even applied samples

of traditional Korean music. In addition to Seo Taiji and Boys, many other singers created a unique Korean style of dance music combining earlier pop genres. The most popular dance music artists included Cheoriwa mi-ae, Hyun Jin-young, Noise, Roo'Ra, COOL, CLON, DJ DOC, and Uhm Jung-hwa. Kim Gun Mo famously introduced reggae to Korea with the song '*Pinggye/Excuse*', and gained great popularity. Punk, metal and rock, which had previously been regarded as underground music, moved into the mainstream. Musicians and bands such as Shinawe, Sanullim, Baekdoosan, Next, Kang San-ae, Shin Hae Chul, and Kim Jong-seo were examples of those who made this shift possible. During the 1990s, no single genre stood out significantly, but examples of many genres proved popular within the mainstream.

Second, the expression of social criticism in pop continued from the 1980s. Seo Taiji and Boys was the first group to rap about socio-political issues (S. Son 1996, 80, 210). They released their third and fourth albums with a few songs that reflected pressing social issues. The song '*Balhaereul ggumggumyeo/Dreaming of Balhae*' contains the wish for the unification of Korea, '*Gyosil ide-a/Classroom idea*' includes critical messages about the Korean education system, and '*Come Back Home*' deals with the issue of teenage runaways. Of note was '*Sidae yugam/Regret of the Times*', which was highly critical of corruption in the government, and served as a trigger that built momentum for the abolition of censorship in music (J. Kim 2008, 19). The duo Panic also criticised social discrimination in '*Oenson jabi/Left-handed*', while Kang San-ae criticised uniformity in society in '*Bbiddakhage/Acting Perverse*'. Although the quantity of socially critical songs was less in comparison to that seen in the previous decade, pop singers continued to express their criticism through music.

Third, the visibility of music increased due to dance music, music videos, and OSTs (original soundtracks). The popularity of dance music was linked to the developing video culture and led to a culture of mass-produced fashion. Hip-hop singers introduced a trend for baggy clothes and metal accessories, and dance music created a culture for oversize trainers (Howard 2006a, 93). What followed was a spate of trends led by the masses of teenage fans. Although K-pop, a product of these fads, is often criticised for being too aesthetically homogenous, it has kept evolving over the years to meet the needs and expectations of its changing

audiences (Maliangkay 2015, 29). Music videos also came into the picture with the establishment of cable music channels Mnet and KMTV in 1995. In particular, the music video for Cho Sung Mo's debut, titled 'To Heaven,' was greatly popular due to its movie-like format. On the back of popular television dramas such as '*Jiltu/Jealousy*' and '*Majimak seungbu/The Last Match*', OSTs were also top hits.

Development in management and production in the entertainment industry provided a fourth category within pop culture. Starting in the 1990s, singers began to be trained and debuted using production systems devised by management companies. The management system proved crucial in the promotion of the Korean pop music industry (Y.J. Kim 2004, 137). The system is considered one of the most important factors behind the success of K-pop in the new century (M.H. Lee 2011, 22; S.J. Lim 2013, 344; J.B. Park and Shin 2013, 5412). However, there has been some criticism of this system, in that singers are more focused on their appearances over singing ability, and are entertainers rather than musicians (Y.A. Kim 2008, 173).

Finally, the fifth category for consideration is the increased number of teenage fans and the fandom phenomenon. Since the 1990s, teenagers have wielded strong influence over all pop culture, and pop music itself proved to be no exception (J.M. Kang 1992, 204-206). In fact, the fandom culture started in the 1970s to celebrate Nam Jin, Na Hoon-A, and Cho Yong Pil, yet it was not until the late 1990s that fan clubs were systematically established by entertainment companies. Starting with the Club H.O.T (H.O.T, the band, is an acronym for High-five Of Teenagers), DSF (Dear Sechskies Friends), and Fan G.O.D (Groove Over Dose), fan clubs began to be organised systemically, expressing a club's identity through specific symbols and colours. Joining a fan club or being a fan of a singer became a way of representing identity for teenagers in the late 1990s (J.Y. Hyun 1998, 128).

Turning to the 21st century, Korean pop music has commonly become known as 'K-pop', and it forms a major part of the Korean Wave (*Hallyu*) phenomenon, with dramas, movies and cuisine. The Korean Wave, as cultural production, has developed in collaboration with other businesses and has benefited from the advent of the Internet. K-pop fans all over the world listen to their favourite singers, watch music videos through YouTube, and support their



favourites by purchasing albums and goods. The sales of the top three entertainment companies in Korea (SM, YG and JYP) recorded around Korean ₩365, ₩349, and ₩102 billion respectively (approximately UK £249, £238, and £69 million) in revenues during 2017. Moreover, the revenue accrued by BTS, the most popular K-pop groups in recent years, was expected to surpass 1,000 billion South Korean Won (approximately £1 billion) in 2018.<sup>27</sup> Despite concerns and criticisms, K-pop has proved very successful economically and has become a representative feature of contemporary Korean culture.

One of the most significant cultures that impacts Korean pop music is *noraebang*, singing rooms known as *karaoke* in Japan. This spread through Korea in the 1990s. Creighton defines *noraebang* culture as an activity in which 'popular music is given meaning and interwoven into the real lives of contemporary Koreans' (2006, 135). Zhang (2006, 175) asserts that *noraebang* is a space where Korean youth can find a sense of community by singing popular music together. *Noraebang* culture provides a focus for pop music among Koreans in London as well. Most singing rooms are located in the corners of Korean restaurants so that people can have a go after a meal. Regardless of age, Koreans often go to *noraebang* with their peers to sing Korean songs. *Noraebang* machines are also found at some Korean immigrant gatherings, as singing at parties is a custom among Koreans. Singing Korean pop songs and entertaining each other, Koreans share common sentiments and strengthen their ties.

## 6. North Korean music

The music of North and South Korea has developed as if worlds apart since division due to the different political ideologies of the two states. Various arts were created and fostered by individuals in South Korea due to its democracy, whereas all arts were controlled by the state in North Korea, it being a socialist country. According to the book *Munhak Yesul Sajeon* (Literary Art Dictionary), North Korean music in the early period of the division was formed according to Kim Il Sung's commands, based on a socialistic realism that espoused the creation

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<sup>27</sup> Kang, Yun-kyung. "'Bangtan Sonyeondan' Gyeongje Hyogwa Choeso Iljowon (the Economic Effect of Bts Would Be at Least 1,000 Billion Korean Won)", <http://www.yna.co.kr/view/AKR20180627162700980>, 10 October 2020.

of revolutionary art underpinned by the principle of socialist content and interwoven with a nationalist dimension (1972, 497).

With the introduction of *juche* in 1955, a fundamental ideology permeated every part of North Korean society. The term *juche* is normally translated as 'self-reliance', but it is in fact a more complex idea comprising independence in terms of politics (*jaju*), national economy (*jarip*), and national defence (*jawi*). *Juche* ideology is applied to art and a book *Juchejeok Munye Iron* (Self-reliant Art Theory) was published in 1975 which covers the development of revolutionary literary arts. However, the theory emerged as a continuation of earlier ideas of socialistic realism (J.Y. Hwang et al. 2002, 18). *Juche* ideology was applied to all areas, but it was not until 1982 that the ideology was finally and formally described in a book, *Juche Sasang-e Daehayeo* (On Juche Ideology) by the son of the first leader of North Korea, Kim Jong Il. In 1992, music theory based on *juche* ideology was compiled and published under the title *Eumak Yesullon* (On the Art of Music), which is depicted in the book *Munhak Yesul Sajeon* (Literary Art Dictionary) as acclaimed 'historical literature that has made contributions to pioneering the original field of the development of human literature and science, [and] which has given the overall and complete answer to all theoretical and practical problems in creating our style of music suited to the masses.' (1991, 842).

Music is an essential tool to promote and cultivate socialist and communist ideology in North Korea. For this purpose, all music research and activity has been conducted and ultimately controlled by national institutions. In 1947, the *Gojeonak Yeon-guso* (Korean classical music research institute) was founded to specifically work on the reformation of traditional instruments and *changgeuk* (a type of Korean opera based on *pansori*) (J.Y. Hwang et al. 2002, 133). Later, it developed into the *Minsok Yeon-gusil* (Folklore Laboratory) and *Joseon Eumakga Dongmaeng* (North Korean Musicians' Alliance) under the Academy of Social Sciences, and these institutions published academic journals with titles such as *Munhwa Yusan* (Cultural Heritage), *Joseon Eumak* (North Korean Music), and *Joseon Yesul* (North Korean Arts) (S.H. Kim 2016, 188). Notably, the North Korean Musicians' Alliance, founded in 1961, systematically controls musical activities and is subdivided into five departments: national music, contemporary music, children's music, composition, and critical analysis. It has branches in each

province (T.U. No 1990, 158). I shall now investigate how music genres have developed in North Korea.

*Minjok eumak* (National/People's music) is defined as music that reflects the everyday feelings of people and their unique emotional characteristics in Literary Art Dictionary (1972, 391). The concept was introduced directly after liberation under the instruction of Kim Il Sung, the first leader of North Korea, and it became the basis of culture and art theory during the early period until the mid-1950s. According to Kim's instruction, tradition is the root for ethnic tradition, established by revolutionary tradition and inherited by communist ideology (T.U. No 1990, 178). Thus, national music is based on traditional styles of music and reflects the socialist idea. In other words, music and instruments that are discrepant from socialist ideology and forms not sanctioned by the government were excluded. *Pansori* is a case in point, and there are two main reasons why it was officially removed from the North Korean scene. One is Kim Il Sung's criticism that *pansori* was behind the times so its hoarse sounds should not be permitted (Il Sung Kim 1971, 159-61). Another is that the coarse vocalisation of *pansori* is unsuitable for the delivery of lyrics and contents containing the nation's socialist ideology (I.K. Bae 2014a, 107). Bae relates how *pansori* was censored in 1962 after ten years of discussions (Ibid., 69), although, drawing on his personal experience in Pyongyang in 1992, Howard asserts that although *pansori* has disappeared from public view, it may continue to exist in institutions (2020, 154-55).

The cultural reformation carried out at the beginning of the state's foundation selected only music suitable for the socialist state. Among traditional music genres, music for the people such as folksongs was permitted, whereas all court music was removed as it was regarded as being a product of the class system. In the same vein, court ritual instruments were removed, and other traditional instruments were reformed in accordance with the requirements of the North Korean ideology to give smooth sounds, heptatonic scales, a wider range of notes, and a simplification of instrument structures. As a result, the *haegeum* (two-stringed fiddle) and wind instruments were expanded from one into three to four types according to pitch range, and new instruments such as the *ongnyugeum* (harp-zither) were created. The instruments that were not subjugated to reform

included the *geomungo* (a zither with fixed frets) and *ajaeng* (a zither played with a bow). Although both are often used in South Korea, they were excluded from ensembles and orchestras in North Korea due to their limitations (J.Y. Hwang et al. 2002, 197). Thus, unlike South Korea, in which traditional music is considered worth preserving, the notion of traditional music in North Korea is one of selecting and reconstituting forms that reflect socialist ideology, and the art and music theory (Ibid., 206).

For a long time, considerable effort was made to re-create not only the instruments, but also a vocalisation suitable for *juche* ideology. According to Kim Jong Il's decree that coarse vocal sounds needed to be removed, and that ethnic features and sentiments should be reflected in a Western vocalisation method (Nam 1991, 90-1), discussions on the manner of vocalisation reflecting *juche* ideas were held. However, this brought about a confusion between what is considered Western and national in vocalisation (J.-d. Choi 1986, 54; Y.K. Son 1993, 54). Consequently, a national vocal style was developed that supposedly improved the vocalisation of folksongs. Since folksongs can explicitly deliver lyrics containing the ideology and sentiments of socialist North Korea, it was condoned as an important part of the national music scene, with Kim Jong Il saying: '*minyo* (folksongs) is the essence of national music and is embodied with the excellent features of national music' (1991a, 24). Hence, the government supported the discovery of and arrangement of folksongs, and published music scores and research books for them. In particular, *Joseon Minyo 1,000 Gokjip* (1,000 Korean Folksongs) includes not only traditional, but also newly composed folksongs, and classifies songs into five categories largely according to the contents of their lyrics: for labour, social life, traditional games, social politics, and orally transmitted children's songs. A new vocalisation was developed for newly composed folksongs and choral pieces focusing on three aspects: explicit pronunciation, effective expression of musical style, and accurate vocal production and breathing (J.Y. Hwang et al. 2002, 266-75). Indeed, folksongs have taken an essential position in the North Korean music scene and have been widely studied since the 1950s.

One of the important genres in North Korean music is *gaguk* (lit. song drama). Before the division, *changguk* (a type of Korean opera based on *pansori*)

was also widely performed in Korea, being based on traditional stories. It continued to be performed until 1964 in North Korea (Howard 2020, 149), yet it was discarded along with the official removal of *pansori*. In place of this, two genres – *hyeongmyeong gageuk* (revolutionary opera) and *minjok gageuk* (people's opera) – were introduced, which reflect political ideology and approved vocal styles. The first revolutionary opera, '*Pibada*/Sea of blood' was introduced in 1971, becoming the model for all other revolutionary operas. In addition to *Pibada*, there are five representative revolutionary operas in North Korea today: '*Dang-ui chamdoen ddal*/True Daughter of the Party' (1971), '*Ggot paneun cheonyeo*/Flower Girl' (1972), '*Millima iyagihara*/Oh! Tell the Forest' (1972), and '*Geumgangsanui nora*/Song of Mount Geumgang' (1973). Min Kyong-chan isolates three general features of revolutionary opera: they were created in a short period of time by several contributors under the theme of the communist revolution. The genre excludes personal sentiments and thoughts, but stresses generic universal and collective emotions, and places emphasis on art in conjunction with *juche* ideology (2002a, 125). Focusing on the musical aspects, Jeon Youngsun defines five characteristics: verse-songs (*jeolga*), offstage choruses (*bangchang*), three-dimensional stage presentations, dance, and an orchestra combining Western and national instruments (2019, 28-29). In line with these characteristics, Howard distinguishes revolutionary operas from Western forms in terms of three features; a transferability of the themes of songs that enable them to be used in other contexts, offstage choruses that replace recitatives due to the requirement of realism, and audiences that are used as a part of the opera like tools for state control (2020, 101-102). Indeed, revolutionary operas have peculiar characteristics which cannot be compared to other genres. People's operas, in contrast, are based on traditional stories such as '*Chunhyangjeon*/Tale of *Chunhyang*' and '*Simcheongjeon*/Tale of *Simcheong*'. They do not refer to socialist ideology, but are 'apt for an ideological interpretation' (H. Lee 2000, 72).

*Gayo* (popular songs) remain the representative contemporary musical form of North Korea. As pop songs, they mirror Western popular music and are played with electronic instruments. Although their musical characteristics are similar to Western pop, the usage of the music is not the same. All pop songs are

censored and controlled by the government; songs with ‘elements that stimulate vulgar and unhealthy hedonism, and eccentric and degenerate tastes’ (J.I. Kim 1991, 377) are rejected. Only songs conveying *juche* ideology are allowed and the topics of lyrics can be categorised into four: praising the country, glorifying the leader and his family, expressing a wish for reunification, and encouraging work and labour (D.L. Kwon 2012, 160). We can see that, during the Chollima Movement in the late 1950s,<sup>28</sup> many songs were written to encourage labour production. For instance, songs with light and joyful melodies in the music collection *Pung-eogi Hwinallija* (Blessing the Fishing Season) describe the sea as unthreatening and where young people can realise their dreams (I.K. Bae 2014b, 352). In the 1980s, the first two pop groups were set up: Wangjaesan Light Music Band (*Wangjaesan gyeong-eumakdan*) in 1983 and Bocheonbo Electronic Ensemble (*Bocheonbo jeonja-eumakdan*) in 1985. The former includes musicians, singers and dancers, and mainly performs songs praising socialism and instilling a sense of social cohesion among the masses. The latter originally belonged to the Mansudae Art Troupe, but was separated out in 1985. Their performances focus more on music rather than dance, and incorporate themes close to everyday life. This is seen in their ‘hits’ such as ‘*Hwiparam/Whistle*’ and ‘*Bangabseumnida/Nice to meet you*’, which are well-known in South Korea. In accordance with other music in North Korea, Bocheonbo’s music and performances were politically utilised to suit the times. According to Keith Howard’s analysis, Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Il are respectively described as the sun and the star in albums by both groups released in 1991, Wangjaesan 2 and Bocheonbo Volume 29 (2006c, 159-60). However, during the chaotic period in 1994, when the first leader of North Korea, Kim Il Sung, died, songs on the album Bocheonbo 46 were used to make the public believe that all was well, associating Kim Jong Il with the army and announcing him as the new leader (ibid., 161-62). As for the musical style of the two groups, Kwon notes that their music is different from pop outside North Korea in two ways; one is their highly polished and

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<sup>28</sup> The thought-remoulding and collective socialism campaign began in 1958 in order to inspire and increase people’s production. However, Myers (2010) asserts that North Korean historians fabricated the campaign to begin it in 1956 so that it did not appear to copy China’s Great Leap Forward.

uniform vocals, and the other is their intention to create a sound that serves *juche* ideology and spreads it to the masses (2012, 160). Nonetheless, both bands were very popular in the 1980s and well into the 1990s in both North Korea and Japan, in the latter primarily among zainichi Koreans (Howard 2020, 243).

Since both Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Il were interested in music, they also composed songs. Particularly, eight of their pieces set an example for other composers and are named as 'immortal classical masterpieces' (I.K. Bae 2012, 200). The songs composed by Kim Il Sung are classified as revolutionary songs, because their lyrics reflect the anti-Japanese and communist revolution. However, some revolutionary songs, including Kim Il Sung's pieces, are thought to be originally Japanese army songs, pop songs, and traditional folksongs (K.C. Min 1998, 157). Analysing the relationship between '*Sahyangga*/Longing for Hometown' and other songs, Lee Mi-Sun (2015, 164-66) discovers three common characteristics which are deployed uniformly: a frequent use of major sixth intervals, octave leaps, and the exclamation 'ah' in the lyrics.

Ideological education through music is no exception in respect to children. The music and dance collection *Song of Glory to the Fatherly Marshal* (1974) illustrates how Kim Il Sung was idolised through songs and performances. This ideological education continues until today and can be observed in Lee Mi-Sun's analysis of the music collection, *Haenim Ddara Pineun Ggot* (Flowers Blooming Under the Sun, 2011) (Ibid., 172-73). The collection consists of three main topics, namely, the army, Kim Jong Suk, and a hometown. Kim Jong Suk, mother of Kim Jong Il and first wife of Kim Il Sung, became an important figure when Kim Jong Il succeeded his father Kim Il Sung, and came to be championed as mother to the nation. Children were educated through songs that they would become soldiers when they grew up, and to take historical places as hometowns from their youth.

In summary, music has proved to be a vital tool for North Korea, supporting its governance and propagating communist ideology. It has evolved with changing ideas and intentions. So, vocal music, which is able to convey ideology, has been regarded as more important than instrumental music, regardless of the genre. North Korea has taken a different position on traditional music than South Korea. Whereas South Korea focuses on the preservation of traditional music, North Korea aims to improve the tradition. For this reason, the

endeavour to create an independent music through national music has been viewed positively, aside from other issues such as its political use (e.g. T.U. No 1990, 193; Chon 2002, 192). Korean musicologists, however, consider that musical exchange and research between the two states can contribute to a mutual understanding of their different cultures, and close the musical gap between North and South (B.S. Song 1998, 41; Chon 2002, 192-93; T.U. No 2002, 193).



## CHAPTER 3

### Understanding the Korean diaspora in London

The Korean community in London can be considered as having had a rather short history compared to other immigrant communities in the UK such as the Chinese, Indian, and Pakistani diasporas, or other Korean diasporas in countries such as the US, Japan, and China. However, as mentioned in the first chapter, several scholars have pointed out that the Korean diaspora in London has complex and unique aspects, such as South Korean migrants and North Korean refugees interacting with each other in one community, which would not ordinarily be the case (J. Lee 2012b, 55; S.J. Lee and Lee 2014, 142; H. Shin 2016, 39). Prior to detailing my ethnomusicological research, I will first highlight the historical backdrop and formation process. This will cover how and when Koreans began to move to the UK, how the Korean community formed, and what changes the community has undergone. Then I look at past cultural activities pre-dating my arrival and research in 2014, in particular, who ran activities, what their aim was, who the participants were, whether these activities still continue, and if not, what are the reasons why not.

#### 1. The South Korean community

Korea and the UK agreed on their first treaty in April 1882, and the first diplomatic minister of the Korean Empire, Min Young-Don, was sent to the UK in 1902, with a retinue of five junior staff. He withdrew in 1904 due to the unstable political conditions in Korea at that time. The first Korean to come to the UK, apart from government officials, is believed to have been a sailor called Cho Nam-Hae.<sup>29</sup> He began to work on ships at the age of 12, became a sailor on Japanese ocean liners at sixteen, and came to the UK in 1917, when he was 22. After arriving in the UK, he started to work on British vessels, and finally settled here, marrying a British woman and passing away in 1991.

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<sup>29</sup> Chae Woo Byung, “*Hanin gyominui yeongguk jeongchakgwa baljachwi* (Retracing the course of Koreans in Britain)”, 31 January 2003, <http://koweekly.co.uk/news.php?code=&mode=view&num=481>, accessed 20 October 2020.

Although relations between Britain and Korea were established more than a century ago, migration associated with the present Korean community only began in 1949, after diplomatic relations between the then newly formed South Korea and the British government were established. Yoon Chi-chang, the first diplomatic minister for the Republic of Korea, was formally seconded to London to set up a Korean legation in 1950. The legation raised its status to an embassy in 1957, by agreement between the two countries, and the first ambassador, Kim Yong-shik, was sent to the UK the same year.<sup>30</sup> Thenceforth, Koreans started to move to the UK, most of whom were embassy staff, students studying abroad, and women who married British citizens (J. Lee 2011, 142). The history of the Korean community began with the Korean Overseas Students Society (KOSS), which was organised in 1958 and was the first official Korean organisation in the UK to be acknowledged by the Korean embassy.<sup>31</sup> KOSS membership was restricted to Koreans studying in the UK for more than three months. The KOSS changed its name to become the Korean Residents Society (KRS) in 1964, changing its membership criteria to include those who not only study, but also those who stayed in the UK for more than three months. Some members from that time report that the community was very close to each other and had a family-like feel; the small membership numbered around 200 people in total.

An influx of Koreans to the UK began in the 1970s with the overseas expansion of Korean companies. At that time, the construction boom in the Middle East brought opportunities for Korean companies to gain access to overseas markets. Lee Jeanyoung (2012b, 182) and Kim Jeomsook (2015, 268) point out that the boom was also a main trigger for the increasing number of Koreans in the UK since, in order to facilitate business across Europe, Korean

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<sup>30</sup> Embassy of the Republic of Korea in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, [http://overseas.mofa.go.kr/gb-ko/wpge/m\\_8369/contents.do](http://overseas.mofa.go.kr/gb-ko/wpge/m_8369/contents.do), accessed 12 October 2020.

<sup>31</sup> Korean Residents Society United Kingdom, "*Jaeyeong haninhoe-ui yeoksaneun 1958nyeon sijakhan jaeyeong han-guk yuhaksaenghoega wonjo* (The history of the KRSUK began in 1958 with the Korean Overseas Students Society)", 2 December 2014, [http://www.krsuk.com/zboard/view.php?id=notice&page=13&sn1=&divpage=1&sn=off&ss=on&sc=on&select\\_arrange=name&desc=asc&no=237&PHPSESSID=5c4152a9eb9fbdd91336a2b5334e2365](http://www.krsuk.com/zboard/view.php?id=notice&page=13&sn1=&divpage=1&sn=off&ss=on&sc=on&select_arrange=name&desc=asc&no=237&PHPSESSID=5c4152a9eb9fbdd91336a2b5334e2365), accessed 12 October 2020.

companies such as Samsung, LG, Hyundai, and Korean Air set up London branches. A large number of employees were sent to the UK with their families to live and work in the 1980s. The employees were meant to return back to Korea after the specific period of their contract (which was usually around three years). Some went back, but more commonly it was only the fathers who returned, leaving behind the rest of their family in the UK to improve their children's education. Unlike the increase in the number of sojourning employees, the number of students studying abroad did not increase through the 1980s, because of the strict departure policy in place in Korea: male university graduates had to serve in the military, then pass an English test, and then only carry \$200 abroad with them. They also had to overcome the British policy for foreign students, in which it was a rare opportunity to be awarded a scholarship, in which work was not allowed, and in which high tuition fees were incurred (J. Lee 2011, 159).



**Figure 3.1. Korean-related businesses in Koreatown (photo by the author).**

In the early days of migration, Koreans lived around South West London, near Putney, Wimbledon, and Wandsworth, because the embassy was located in Wimbledon and the Korean company Hyundai, which had the largest number of Korean employees in the UK at that time, was in Putney (ibid., 163). However, from the mid-1980s, many families moved to Raynes Park, New Malden, and

Kingston, the rent being cheaper than Wimbledon but such areas had the same advantage of accessibility to central London as well as high standards of public education for children. Then, the liberalisation of overseas travel by the Korean government in 1989 encouraged more Koreans to travel abroad. This enabled Koreans to travel much more easily, and the UK was one of the chosen destinations. Many students were also able to go abroad to study without government control. Some who did, did not go back to Korea, choosing instead to settle down in the UK after finishing their studies. The increasing number of Koreans in the area southwest of Wimbledon generated a high demand for Korean related businesses, leading many Koreans to voluntarily move to the UK seeking new business opportunities such as opening Korean restaurants, supermarkets, travel agencies, real estate agencies, rental agencies and educational agencies. As these businesses emerged, they eventually formed Koreatown (Figure 3.1).

The number of Korean resident employees exceeded that of settled immigrants in the 1970 and 1980s, and the population structure naturally organised itself so that the migrant group supported the sojourning employees. Hence, the temporary workers began to exercise initiatives in the community, and the first conflicts arose at this point. Migrant members thought they should lead the community as they were permanent residents, while the workers were meant to return to Korea after a short-term residency. Table 3.1 shows the result: the role of the Korean Residents Society president passed from migrant members to sojourning workers from May 1974 for the next 20 years.

Settled migrants decided to form a separate immigrant-centric association called *Jaeyeong Hanguk Gyominhoe* (lit. overseas Koreans in the UK) in 1980, due to disagreements with short-term residents. Meanwhile, the Korean Residents Society (*Hanin Hyeophoe*) was run by the sojourning workers. The two associations functioned in parallel for eight years, reuniting in 1988 after multiple discussions and negotiations. They agreed to reunify the KRS, but to allow it to be driven by settled immigrants.<sup>32</sup> Change of initiative between short-term

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<sup>32</sup> Overseas Koreans Foundation, “*Yuhaksaeng danchero sijakhae hanaro tonghapdoen yeongguk haninsahoe* (UK Korean society, started as a group of overseas students and united into one)” [http://webzine.korean.net/201508/pages/sub01\\_02\\_01.jsp](http://webzine.korean.net/201508/pages/sub01_02_01.jsp), accessed 12 October 2020.

employees and permanent migrants happened not only in the Korean community, but had also occurred in the UK Japanese community during the 1930s (Itoh 2001, 176-77). Since the progression of Koreans immigrant to the UK mirrored that of the Japanese, both communities were affected by similar issues.

Role	Order	Duration	Name	Occupation/Employer
Manager	1 <sup>st</sup>	Mar 1958 -	Hyun Kyung-ho	No records
	2 <sup>nd</sup>	Sep 1958 -	Kim Ip-sam	
	3 <sup>rd</sup>	Nov 1959 -	Shin Dong-sik	
	4 <sup>th</sup>	Oct 1960 -	Hyun Kyung-ho	
	5 <sup>th</sup>	Nov 1960 -	Yoo Tae-ho	
No record		May 1961 -	No record	No records
President	1 <sup>st</sup>	Nov 1965 -	Kim Hee-suk	
	2 <sup>nd</sup>	Mar 1966 -	Kang Il-gu	Professor
	3 <sup>rd</sup>	Dec 1966 -	Lee Hyun-bok	
	4 <sup>th</sup>	Dec 1967 -	Jung Hyun-sik	Migrants in LA
	5 <sup>th</sup>	Aug 1969 -	Oum Jang-gyung	Doctor
	6 <sup>th</sup>	Dec 1970 -	Kim Sung-eung	Korea Line Corporation
	7 <sup>th</sup>	Jan 1973 -	Jung Jong-hwa	Professor
	8 <sup>th</sup>	May 1974 -	Jung Hee-young	Hyundai
	9 <sup>th</sup>	Dec 1974 -	Kang Chul-soo	Chunwoosa
	10 <sup>th</sup>	Fed 1978 -	Eum Yong-ki	Hyundai
	11 <sup>th</sup>	1979 -	Lee Jung-sang	Hyundai
	12 <sup>th</sup>	1980 -	Park Young-guk	KOTRA
	13 <sup>th</sup>	1981 -	Pyeon Do-kwon	Daewoo Construction
	14 <sup>th</sup>	1982 -	Cho Joong-yong	Choheung bank
	15 <sup>th</sup>	1983 -	Kim Jong-soo	Samsung
	16 <sup>th</sup>	Jan 1985 -	Park Young-soo	Sunkyung
	17 <sup>th</sup>	Jul 1986 -	Kang Chul-soo	Chunwoosa
	18 <sup>th</sup>	Jan 1988 -	Lee Young-chul	Samsung
	19 <sup>th</sup>	May 1989 -	Shin Ho-chul	Classification Society
	20 <sup>th</sup>	Jan 1991 -	Kim In-ho	Kumho

**Table 3.1. Korean Residents Society Presidents (1958-1992).<sup>33</sup>**

The KRS seemed to be well-managed for a while, until another issue emerged in 2007, when it was embroiled in a legal battle relating to its presidential election. Park Young-geun, the 27th president, accused Suk Il-soo and Cho Tae-hyun of fraudulent election practices.<sup>34</sup> The situation was made more complicated by

<sup>33</sup> [http://www.krsuk.info/page\\_iWHc79](http://www.krsuk.info/page_iWHc79), accessed 9 April 2020.

<sup>34</sup> Good Morning London, "Nundeong-icheoreom bureonago itneun haninhoe

financial problems. Park made further allegations concerning the cost of the lawsuit, but the case was suspended on procedural grounds by the order of the judge.<sup>35</sup> Due to the long-lasting lawsuit, the community did not fare well, and in 2012 two additional organisations were founded separate from the KRS: the *Yeongguk Haninuihoe* (association of UK Koreans) with Kim Myeon-hoe as president,<sup>36</sup> and the *Jaeyeongguk Hanin Yeonhaphoe* (UK Korean federation) with Kim Si-woo as president.<sup>37</sup> However, neither of these new organisations was credited by the South Korean Embassy as an official association for the Korean community, and both were criticised for dis-uniting the community.<sup>38</sup> Despite this complicated situation, the KRS held several cultural events, including Korean Festivals, food festivals, and year-end parties, as they sought to reunite the community. However, the unresolved lawsuit led to the KRS having to cease its

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*sosong biyong* (The snowballing litigation costs of the KRSUK)", 31 October 2012,

[http://www.goodmorninglondon.net/sub\\_read.html?uid=778&section=sc4&section2=한인소식](http://www.goodmorninglondon.net/sub_read.html?uid=778&section=sc4&section2=한인소식), and Park Pil Lip, "*Gyohoe jangnodeuri bullanui juyeokdeullo deungjanghan yeongguk haninsahoe* (The Korean community in Britian, where church elders have emerged as the leader of the rebellion)", 7 January 2008, <http://m.newspower.co.kr/10713>, accessed 12 October 2020.

<sup>35</sup> Kim Myeon-hoe, "*Cheongmunhoe bogoseo* (Hearing report)", 26 June 2012, [http://www.eknews.net/xenews/journal\\_special/397780](http://www.eknews.net/xenews/journal_special/397780), and Kim Se-ho, "*Jaeyeonghaninhoe sosonggwallyeon cheongmunhoe* (Hearing on the lawsuit of the KRSUK)", 27 June 2012, [http://www.eknews.net/xenews/?mid=journal\\_special&document\\_srl=397777&listStyle=viewer](http://www.eknews.net/xenews/?mid=journal_special&document_srl=397777&listStyle=viewer), accessed 12 October 2020.

<sup>36</sup> Goodmorning London, "*Yeongguk haninuihoe chulbeom* (Establishment of the association of UK Koreans)", 22 May 2012, [http://www.goodmorninglondon.net/sub\\_read.html?uid=704](http://www.goodmorninglondon.net/sub_read.html?uid=704), 12 October 2020.

<sup>37</sup> Kim Seho, "*Jaeyeongguk hanin yeonhaphoe chodae hoejang-e gimsiwu baksa dangseon* (Dr. Kim Si-woo was elected as the first president of UK Korean federation)", 18 December 2012, [http://www.eknews.net/xenews/journal\\_special/407755](http://www.eknews.net/xenews/journal_special/407755), accessed 12 October 2020.

<sup>38</sup> Kim Seho, "*Jaeyeong jeonim hanin hoejangdan, jaeyeong hanin chong-yeonhaphoe injeongchi ankiro gyeoruigae* (Former President of the KRSUK decided not to accept the UK Korean federation)", 6 March 2013, [http://eknews.net/xenews/?\\_filter=search&mid=journal\\_special&category=18560&search\\_keyword=%ED%95%9C%EC%9D%B8%ED%9A%8C%EC%9E%A5%EB%8B%A8&search\\_target=title&document\\_srl=412039](http://eknews.net/xenews/?_filter=search&mid=journal_special&category=18560&search_keyword=%ED%95%9C%EC%9D%B8%ED%9A%8C%EC%9E%A5%EB%8B%A8&search_target=title&document_srl=412039), accessed 12 October 2020.

events after the 2013 Korean Festival. In spite of the absence of an official association, Koreans held year-end parties themselves, because of the significant meaning for Koreans in celebrating the completion of a year. A large number of people participated, and Korean-related business owners supported the events by preparing Korean food and donating giveaways.<sup>39</sup>

Another Korean organisation, the *Yeonghanhoe* (abb. of the UK Korean Association, although it took the English name 'Association of Korean Communities in the UK'), with Cho Hyun-ja as president, was founded in 2016. It had more than 30 committee members,<sup>40</sup> which is an uncommonly large number, although, I assume this was a way to include Koreans from diverse fields and to embrace members from other associations. Unlike the other relatively inactive organisations at the time, *Yeonghanhoe* organised several events such as sports competitions, briefing sessions for childrens' education, and cultural events<sup>41</sup> which had been lacking in prior years. Regarding these, the KRS expressed concern over not having consented to the use of their name on the group's website.<sup>42</sup> Nonetheless, it appears that many enjoyed the *Yeonghanhoe* events. However, criticism of the divisions caused by the creation of another association was inevitable.

Disputes within overseas Korean communities have always been a regular

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<sup>39</sup> Kim Seho, "*Jaeyeong hanindeul, dajeong dagamhan songnyeon janchiro chinmok daiyeo* (Koreans in Britain having a friendly year-end party)", 7 January 2014, [http://www.eknews.net/xenews/journal\\_special/429942](http://www.eknews.net/xenews/journal_special/429942), accessed 12 October 2020.

<sup>40</sup> Lee Jong-hwan, "*Yeongguk hanin sahoe sae gusimche 'yeonghanhoe' chulbeom* (The launch of the *Yeonghanhoe*, a new centripetal body of the British Korean community)", 18 March 2016, <http://www.worldkorean.net/news/articleView.html?idxno=21272>, and The Euro Journal, "*Yeonghanhoe sinim jiphaengbu sogae* (Introduction of the new executive committee members of *Yeonghanhoe*)", 4 March 2016, [http://www.eknews.net/xenews/hanin\\_kr/475164](http://www.eknews.net/xenews/hanin_kr/475164), accessed 12 October 2020.

<sup>41</sup> Kim Seho, "*je 1hoe yeongguk hanin munhwaje* (The 1<sup>st</sup> Korean Cultural Day)", 29 October 2016, <http://associateddna.tistory.com/379>, accessed 12 October 2020.

<sup>42</sup> KRSUK, "*Johyeonjassiwa yeonghanhoe, haninhoe doyoung ju-ui* (Cho Hyun-ja and *Yeonghanhoe*, caution for using KRSUK's name illegally)", 25 March 2016, <http://www.krsuk.com/zboard/view.php?id=notice&no=374>, accessed 12 October 2020.

feature not only in the UK, but also in places including New York,<sup>43</sup> Paraguay,<sup>44</sup> and Cambodia.<sup>45</sup> Eight overseas Korean associations were designated as ‘dispute groups’ by the Korean government in 2015, including the Korean Association in the UK.<sup>46</sup> Once it has been classified as a disputed association, a group cannot receive any funds or benefits from the government. The reasons for such disputes normally stem from conflicts relating to the vested interests among committee members,<sup>47</sup> but the disputes have an adverse effect on all Korean residents who are members of the community.

Fortunately, the litigants of the KRS agreed to discontinue their long-standing lawsuit, and tried to normalise the association in 2014.<sup>48</sup> The conclusion was unifying the two associations – the KRS and *Yeonghanhoe* – into one united

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<sup>43</sup> Shin Dong-chan, “nat tteugeowun haninhoe bungyu nyuyok ta-imseudo deulchwonatda (The New York Times uncovered an embarrassing dispute with the Korean community)”, 11 April 2015, [http://www.koreadaily.com/news/read.asp?art\\_id=3301384](http://www.koreadaily.com/news/read.asp?art_id=3301384), accessed 12 October 2020.

<sup>44</sup> Kim Young-gi, “*Jungnammi chongyeon, paragwai haninhoe bungyudanche jijeong cheolhoe chokgu* (The Korean Association for Mid and South America, urging the withdrawal of the designation of the Korean association in Paraguay as a conflict group)”, 15 September 2015, <http://www.dongponews.net/news/articleView.html?idxno=29880>, accessed 12 October 2020.

<sup>45</sup> Wang Gil-hwan, “*Cambodia haninhoe bungyu satae jonggyeol...hoejang-e gimhyeonsik ssi* (End of the dispute of the Korean resident association in Cambodia...Chairman is Kim Hyun-sik)”, 11 February 2016, <http://www.yonhapnews.co.kr/bulletin/2016/02/11/0200000000AKR20160211127700371.HTML>, accessed 12 October 2020.

<sup>46</sup> David Kim, “*Hanindanche bunyeol eotteoke chiyuhalkka* (How to resolve the dispute of the Overseas Korean resident associations)”, 20 September 2015, <http://sundayjournalusa.com/2015/09/20/%ED%95%9C%EC%9D%B8%EB%8B%A8%EC%B2%B4-%EB%B6%84%EC%97%B4-%EC%96%B4%EB%96%BB%EA%B2%8C-%EC%B9%98%EC%9C%A0%ED%95%A0%EA%B9%8C/>, accessed 12 October 2020.

<sup>47</sup> Kim Hye-jung, “*Bungyu hanindanche miju-e mollyeo...galdeun jojeonggigu sinseoldoeya* (Dispute overseas Korean associations are concentrated in America...conflict settlement organisation is required)”, 8 September 2015, <http://www.radiokorea.com/news/article.php?uid=189332>, accessed 12 October 2020.

<sup>48</sup> Huh Gyum, “*Jaeyeong haninhoe 7nyeon sosongsibi ildallak* (Coming to an end of the seven-year lawsuit of the KRSUK)”, 30 December 2014, <http://www.dongponews.net/news/articleView.html?idxno=27924>, accessed 12 October 2020.



KRS in 2017. The committee announced that they were going to make efforts to forge a united and organised community.<sup>49</sup> By December 2018, 33 people had served as chairperson of the KRS, or 38 if we include the former KOSS. As of January 2019, the role of president had been handed to Song Chun-soo, the 34th president. Table 3.2 shows the list of presidents of the KRS up to the time of completing this research.

Role	Order	Duration	Name	Occupation/Employer
President	21 <sup>st</sup>	Jan 1993 -	Jang Min-woong	Trade business
	22 <sup>nd</sup>	Jan 1994 -	Kim Jung-woong	Trade business
	23 <sup>rd</sup>	Jan 1996 -	Oh Geuk-dong	Real Estate
	24 <sup>th</sup>	Jan 1998 -	Choi Man-young	Restaurant management
	25 <sup>th</sup>	Jan 2000 -	Lee Sung-jin	Publishing business
	26 <sup>th</sup>	Jan 2001 -	Cho Sung-young	Trade business
	27 <sup>th</sup>	Jan 2003 -	Park Young-geun	Travel & Education agency
	28 <sup>th</sup>	Jan 2004 -	Shin Woo-seung	Hotel management
	29 <sup>th</sup>	Jan 2006 -	Suk Il-soo	Electronic item wholesale
Acting president	-	Jan 2008 -	Cho Tae-hyun	Chartered surveyor
President	30 <sup>th</sup>	Jan 2009 -	Suh Byung-il	Supermarket management
	31 <sup>st</sup>	Jan 2011 -	Park Young-geun	Travel & Education agency
	32 <sup>nd</sup>	Apr 2013 -	Kwon Gap-joong	Electronic item wholesale
Emergency Board Meeting	-	2015 -	-	-
Head of E.B.M	-	Apr 2016 -	Jang hui-gwan	Textile product wholesale
President	33 <sup>rd</sup>	Jan 2017 -	Ha Jae-sung	Restaurant management
Co-presidents	-	Jun – Dec 2017	Ha jae-sung / Cho Hyun-ja	Restaurant management
President	34 <sup>th</sup>	Jan 2019 -	Song Chun-soo	Restaurant management

**Table 3.2. Korean Residents Society Presidents (1993-2020).**

<sup>49</sup> KRSUK, “*Tonghap jaeyeong haninhoe chulbeom* (Establishment of the united KRSUK”, 23 May 2017, [http://www.krsuk.info/board\\_hzFr05/2477](http://www.krsuk.info/board_hzFr05/2477), accessed 12 October 2020.

Most Korean events are publicised in Korean newspapers published in the community. There were seven newspapers in 2012: *Jugan-jeongbo* (Weekly Information), the Korean Weekly, Thames, Euro Times, London Times, Hanin Herald (Korean Herald), and *Europe Hanin Sinmungo* (Voice of Koreans in Europe) (J. Lee 2012b, 198). However, no record of the Weekly Information, Thames, and Voice of Korean in Europe appears to remain, and London Times has continued in an online edition only. Three newspapers are still in circulation as of the time of writing (2020): *The Korean Weekly*, *Hanin Herald*, and *The Euro Journal*.<sup>50</sup> These are published in Korean once a week and are easily obtainable from any Korean supermarkets, restaurants, and offices in the community. They play significant roles in delivering information to the community and in archiving the history of the diaspora. However, as Lee Jeanyoung points out, there are some issues with their credibility and accuracy (ibid., 198-99). For instance, the Korean Weekly wrote a review of the Korean festival in 2003, yet incorrectly, as pointed out by one subscriber.<sup>51</sup> In relation to the dispute regarding the Korean community, Kim Myeon-hoe, the former president of *Yeongguk Haninuihoe* (Association for UK Koreans), circulated an unverified report regarding other newspapers, and this later led to an apology being posted on the Korean Residents Society website.<sup>52</sup> Posting unverified information has been an ongoing issue, yet the community has no alternative primary source for information.

Online communities are more a feature among the younger generations of Koreans than newspaper readership. Two websites, *Yeongguk sarang* (Love the UK) and *Yeongguk joha* (Like the UK), are well-known for sharing information and hosting online flea markets. Once you join the site, anyone can post questions and answers, sell items or publicise job vacancies. Due to these websites being in high demand, the Korean embassy's official announcements are also posted on their

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<sup>50</sup> Euro Times changed its name to the Euro Journal and now includes news of Korean communities all over Europe.

<sup>51</sup> Lee Yeon-ok, "*Annae chaekjaman hwaryeohaetdeon hanin chukje-e danyeowaseo* (After visiting the Korean Festival where only the brochures were fancy)", 28 August 2003, <http://kweekly.co.uk/news.php?code=c3&mode=view&num=1069&page=9&wr=>, accessed 20 October 2020.

<sup>52</sup> Unfortunately, the website of the Korean Residents Society was renewed in 2016, so its posts are no longer available. I have archived earlier posts, however.

notice boards. These websites are specifically useful to those who have recently arrived and need information about the practicalities of living in the UK. Compared to newspapers, online communities have advantages in terms of communicating between members and the option to give immediate replies. Since Facebook's advent as a popular social media tool, a large number of Korean-related groups have been established on its platform, categorised according to purpose and interest, such as groups of alumni, those in the same field of work, those on working holiday visas, and even for Koreans to organise social gatherings. Such groups tend to communicate actively due to their common interests, but are often limited by the age diversity of a group. One interpretation would be that this marks a diversification of communication based around the development of technology.

Surprisingly, since 2011 the number of Koreans in the UK has been steadily decreasing. According to statistics from MOFA, the Korean population in Britain was 46,829 in 2011, 44,749 in 2013, 40,263 in 2015, and 39,934 in 2017. The Brexit referendum of 2016 brought about several changes, and comparing figures for 2015 and 2017, the number of Korean students studying in the UK decreased from 13,559 to 11,183. On the other hand, the number receiving citizenship and permanent residency increased from 10,992 to 11,104 and from 8,476 to 9,611, respectively, perhaps due to fears about the future change in their status.<sup>53</sup> How these numbers increase or decline will be dependent on the changing nature of the situation in the UK and in its international relations.

## **2. The North Korean community**

Since 2004, the UK has admitted North Koreans as refugees, and many come to the UK to find better lives. As mentioned in the preceding chapter, the number of North Koreans in Britain was approximately 620 in 2015 (J.J. Song and Bell 2018b, 8). Once in the UK, they have had to apply to claim asylum and to follow the same procedure as other asylum seekers.<sup>54</sup> If admitted as refugees, they are given permission to stay in the UK for five years, after which they are able to apply for

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<sup>53</sup> A report of overseas Koreans in 2015 and 2017, published by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, South Korea.

<sup>54</sup> <http://www.gov.uk/claim-asylum>, accessed 11 January 2018.

permanent settlement. During this initial period, refugees are able to receive Asylum Support, which covers housing, money for living, healthcare and education for children from the government.<sup>55</sup> Most housing support, however, is located in North England, and many North Koreans are initially assigned to Newcastle, Manchester, or Glasgow. While staying in social housing for a maximum of five years, they will prepare themselves to live in the UK by receiving social adaptation services through charities and by working on their economic independence. After a few years, North Koreans move to settle around New Malden. Since there is already a Korean community in this area, they take advantage of the convenience of using a shared language, eating familiar foods, and taking related job opportunities. Many work for Korean-related companies, which do not require a high level of English proficiency. As the number increased, North Koreans have felt the necessity to establish an association to represent their interests. Thus, the North Korean Residents Society (NKRS)<sup>56</sup> was officially founded in 2010 by James Hong, and four chairpersons served the association through to December 2016. Only those over 20 years old from North Korea can join the association. Members are able to interact with one another by participating in activities such as the annual *Chuseok* (Korean harvest) gathering, year-end parties, athletic competitions and celebrations of the association's foundation. Through these, adults are able to enjoy the occasions by sharing North Korean food and children can learn and enjoy unique North Korean athletics.<sup>57</sup>

In addition to social events, the NKRS has engaged in political and human rights activities geared towards achieving democracy back in North Korea. The association has published the journal *Free NK* since 2011, with both Korean and

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<sup>55</sup> <http://www.gov.uk/asylum-support/what-youll-get>, accessed 11 January 2018.

<sup>56</sup> Their original website address (<http://www.nkrs.org.uk>, last accessed March 2017) had been changed to [www.nkrsuk.com](http://www.nkrsuk.com) due to a consolidation of NKRS and KNRS in December 2016. However, the address has been changed again to [nkrsahos.wwwnlss4.a2hosted.com](http://nkrsahos.wwwnlss4.a2hosted.com), last accessed 13 October 2020.

<sup>57</sup> NKRSUK, "*Changripjel ya-oe cheyukdaehoe* (The NKRSUK anniversary athletic competition)", [http://www.nkrsuk.com/index.php?mid=notice&page=4&document\\_srl=65791](http://www.nkrsuk.com/index.php?mid=notice&page=4&document_srl=65791), accessed 12 January 2018.

English versions designed to educate readers worldwide about the reality of North Korea.<sup>58</sup> They have held several protests, including at the Chinese embassy in London against the Chinese government's forced repatriation of North Korean refugees<sup>59</sup> and outside Westminster campaigning for North Korean human rights.<sup>60</sup>

A second association, the Korean Nationality Residents Society (KNRS),<sup>61</sup> was founded in January 2014. The founder, Choi Seung-chul, used to be on the committee of the NKRS, but resigned due to disagreements on how to run it. He wanted to focus more on life in Britain rather than social movements or political activities campaigning for North Korean democracy, and this made him establish the second association. Those who sided with him joined the KNRS. The association was open to all, so anyone could become a member. Surprisingly, no South Koreans joined. There have been several events held, in the same mould as those of the NKRS, in which Korean food and performance programmes have been prepared by its members.

The KNRS has also run a Free Play Group since 2014, which provides a regular space for education where two parents take it in turns to supervise the children each day. It is organised on Saturdays during term-time and every Wednesday during holidays, either at one of the members' houses or in a park in New Malden. The aim of the group is to spend time with peers and parents from the same heritage, instead of sending children to private institutions. According to participating parents, they try to teach Korean language by watching Korean educational videos made by a South Korean broadcasting service such as *Hangeuri yaho* (Hurray, Korean!). This is despite certain limits: their activities cannot be carried out regularly due to the limited availability of spaces and supervisors,

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<sup>58</sup> <http://www.ifreenk.com>, accessed 7 February 2019.

<sup>59</sup> Kim Dong-guk, "*Jungguk daesagwan ap talbukja gangjebuksong bandae siwi* (Protest in front of the Chinese embassy in London against the Chinese government's forced repatriation of North Korean refugees)", 23 September 2011, [https://www.rfa.org/korean/weekly\\_program/eu\\_defector/eudefector-09232011112406.html](https://www.rfa.org/korean/weekly_program/eu_defector/eudefector-09232011112406.html), accessed 13 October 2020.

<sup>60</sup> Kim Dong-guk, "*Talbukja, Choetaebok yeong bangmun matchwo leondeonseo siwi* (UK North Korean defectors' protest in London on the visit of Choi Tae-bok)", 29 March 2011, [https://www.rfa.org/korean/in\\_focus/london\\_defector-03292011110522.html](https://www.rfa.org/korean/in_focus/london_defector-03292011110522.html), accessed 13 October 2020.

<sup>61</sup> <http://www.nk21.org>, accessed 15 January 2018.

where parents having little spare time to take part in activities due to heavy work commitments. The two associations, the NKRS and KNRS, were run separately for almost three years before their members realised that having two separate entities was an obstacle. They began to discuss consolidation in May 2016, and after a few months agreed to reunite the two associations under the new name *Jaeyeong Talbungmin Yeonhaphoe* (North Korean defectors federation in the UK), although their English name remained the North Korean Residents Society in the UK.<sup>62</sup> Kim Young-sik was elected as chairperson of the united association in November 2016, and new committee members were selected. Since its consolidation, the new NKRS has organised several successful social events attracting large numbers of participants.

In addition to the North Korean associations, the Korean Information Centre (KIC) in New Malden also helps North Korean refugees. The KIC was set up to build a healthier and happier Korean community by the charity organisation Theatre for All,<sup>63</sup> which had already carried out several cultural works aimed at serving the Korean community in New Malden. The centre offers social and language services, working closely with local partners who include the Metropolitan Police, Kingston Council, and Kingston Hospital. Many North Koreans have received aid from the KIC, especially in regard to language, psychological and legal problems. The KIC has run the Korean Resettlement Programme since 2016, which provides language and social knowledge classes. It began as a six-month programme, and most participants were North Korean refugees. Since 2018, the language class has been taken over by Groundwork, the UK charity that helps vulnerable people to overcome social inequality and low skill levels.

The number of members of the unified NKRS stood at around 200 at the beginning of 2018. Considering the overall number of North Korean refugees in

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<sup>62</sup> Choi Seung-chul and Kim Seho, "*Jaeyeong talbukja dance tonghap seonggonghago sae hoejang seonchul, yeongguk hanin sahoe bonbadaya* (North Korean associations were united and elected a new president, Korean community should follow the example)", 15 November 2016, [http://www.eknews.net/xe/journal\\_special/489615](http://www.eknews.net/xe/journal_special/489615), accessed 13 October 2020.

<sup>63</sup> <http://www.koreaninformationcentre.org/>, accessed 15 January 2018.

the UK, their active engagement within the community remains very limited. In fact, many are reluctant to expose their North Korean identity in public, as they feel threatened by the prospect of coming into contact with North Korean secret agents who are rumoured to circulate in the community. Those who left behind family members in North Korea feel they have a sword of Damocles hanging over their heads. According to some, secret agents have been known to threaten individuals, to make them return to North Korea, showing disturbing videos of their families who remain there. Once they realise that their family is suffering due to government condemnation of the refugee's escape, a feeling of guilt is likely to drive them back towards North Korea. For this reason, many try to avoid becoming targets of agents and do not reveal themselves openly in public.

The other reason they hesitate to appear in public is because of discrimination. Their physical appearance is hardly distinguishable from South Koreans. Some might distinguish them by how they dress, yet it is difficult for most people to spot any difference. However, once they start to talk, all Koreans easily recognise their place of origin from dialect and intonation. South Koreans regard North Koreans as being of a lower status. According to Edward Said, setting a boundary between two groups and intensifying dichotomous thought are major characteristics of orientalism (1979, 2). For South Koreans, the North Koreans are 'Oriental', in a way that is not related to ethnicity but to the social forces that are at play. Since South Koreans moved to the UK first and established the community, North Koreans who joined the community later are considered as a minority and are treated differently. Nonetheless, North Koreans had no choice but to work for companies run by South Koreans due to their limited proficiency in English. North Koreans have mentioned to me that once they become a victim of discrimination, they are likely to try to defend themselves against South Koreans.

With this in mind, why do North Koreans decide to live in the UK? Those North Koreans I have interviewed point to three reasons. First is children's education. Even though living in the UK is difficult in several respects, parents anticipate that their children will have better lives, and at least will learn English. Second is that they experience less discrimination than they would in South Korea. Although there is discrimination against North Koreans in the community in London, it is much less compared to that in South Korea where, in fact,

discrimination against North Korean defectors has become a serious issue. Sunwoo Hyun (2012, 24-25) points out that although North Korean refugees share the same language and ethnicity as South Koreans, they receive unfair and discriminating treatment in southern society, and this needs to be resolved from the point of view of it being both a minority and national ideological problem affecting integration. Yoon In Jin (2004, 86) argues that the most difficult aspect for North Korean refugees living in South Korea is the prejudice and discrimination from South Koreans. This situation is well-known to North Korean refugees looking for a country to settle down in, and is a deciding factor in the choice to come to Britain. Here, North Koreans believe that once they speak some English, the British will regard them as just Korean, not North Korean. Third is social welfare. The UK is famed for its high standard of social welfare and policies towards refugees. Having arrived in the UK and been admitted as a refugee, the government provides diverse benefits and North Koreans can apply for British citizenship after staying for five years. Compared to South Koreans, who move to the UK as economic immigrants or students, North Korean refugees are able to easily gain a strong foundation with the support they receive from the government.

The population of North Koreans peaked in 2008, when 174 out of 185 applicants received refugee status. However, the number rapidly decreased to 4 who arrived in 2009, when the bestowal of refugee status was suspended.<sup>64</sup> North Koreans tend to believe this was due to changes in UK refugee quotas but, in fact, and as Watson (2015, 552) and Song and Bell (2018b, 169) note, the biggest reason was that the British government recognised that many North Korean refugees had already received South Korean citizenship – they had gone to South Korea before deciding to move on to the UK. Hence, the British government began to take a more defensive attitude towards new applicants. Also, as Lee Su-jung and Lee Woo-young (2014, 148) point out, there had been some cases where Korean Chinese was granted North Korean refugee status, although they were economic migrants. This deception was discovered and became one of the key reasons for discontinuing the acceptance of North Koreans as refugees. Thereafter,

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<sup>64</sup> Immigration Statistics asylum – Q2 2017 Vol.1 published by the Home Office, UK.



less than 10 North Koreans received refugee status each year, and there has been no successful acceptance since 2016. It is fair to assume that in the near future the North Korean refugee population in the UK will not increase.

### **3. Cultural activities in the past**

During the 20th Century, Korea experienced radical change. In the first half of the century, it suffered the Japanese occupation and then the subsequent Korean War. In the second half, South Korea made great effort to reconstruct the nation through six iterations of a five-year economic development plan, and this brought about rapid economic development. The first five-year plan was initiated in 1962, and this was followed by five more until 1991. As a consequence, South Korea reached an annual average economic growth of 17.6% between 1962 and 1991, and the per capita GDP increased from US\$83 to US\$6,749 (E.T. Park 2014, 87).

The most significant change throughout the 20th Century was modernisation. Koreans embraced Western culture in general, from the necessities of life such as food, clothing and shelter to education, science, art, and religion. Of the aspects, the inflow of Christianity had a particularly significant impact on music and education. Protestant missionaries introduced modern education, and Western music has been at the centre of music in Korea since then (Y.-s. Yi 1985, 31). Hence, Western music dominated early music education, while traditional music was rarely taught. According to analyses of Korean elementary textbooks, the proportion of traditional Korean music comprised only 3.6 percent of the total in the first national educational curriculum, which took effect in 1955, and did not exceed 10 percent until 1988. It gradually increased from 1989, and reached 26.9 percent by 2007 (K.-s. Hyun 2013, 97-98). Most of the first generation of Koreans in the UK were educated in Korea under this system, so it is fair to say that they had little exposure to or understanding of Korean music. In fact, most Koreans over 40 to whom I have talked do not know the name of traditional Korean instruments, not even being able to distinguish them from each other, and easily confused the concepts of traditional Korean music with those of Chinese music. In the 1960 and 1970s, moreover, Western music was regarded as a symbol of modernisation; having a piano at home reflected cultural sophistication and wealth (O. Hwang 2009, 79). Under this circumstance, those

educated before the 1990s might prefer Western music to traditional Korean music. Hence, it would not be possible for them to pass down Korea's musical heritage to the next generation.

Despite some concerns and an occasional unfavourable reception overseas, Korean cultural activities were still organised that presented aspects of traditional and contemporary Korean culture, including food, music, and dance. For the most part, my research is concerned with the history of cultural activities from 1993 onwards, dividing these into three periods: formation (1993-2002), progression (2003-2008), and diversification (2008 onwards). I focus on how events were planned, whom they were conducted by, and what the reasons for and aims of organising these events were. I give an overview of cultural events in order to understand how such activities developed and what influence they had on the community.

### **3.1. Formation (1993-2001)**

Prior to the 1990s, there was no Koreatown in the UK. According to an article in the *Korean Weekly* issued on 12 November 1992, despite the presence of some Korean residents and related businesses, New Malden was yet to become a Koreatown, due to its small size.<sup>65</sup> Thus, it can be assumed that only a few Korean cultural activities were organised among the Koreans who were living there prior to 1992. The earliest significant records are from 1993, when the first community newspaper, the *Korean Weekly*, was launched. Although the company behind it was established in 1991, only data published after 1993 remains available due to a change of owner. Exploring its articles about cultural activities, the organisers of activities were largely divided into three: members of the community, the Korean embassy, and the *Hanyeong Munhwawon* (the Korean Cultural Centre in Britain, the KCCB).

Korean small business owners organised events targeted at Koreans. In June 1993, a famous pop duo of the time, *Haebbaragi* (Sunflower) had a concert at Wimbledon Theatre, invited by the *Korean Weekly* with sponsorships from ten Korean companies to celebrate the second anniversary of the newspaper's

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<sup>65</sup> Re-published version of *Korean Weekly* article on 2 September 1993.

establishment.<sup>66</sup> A Korean restaurant, *Mirinae*, also organised a ‘Student Karaoke Festival’ in 1993 to promote their restaurant.<sup>67</sup> Korean churches and a Buddhist temple organised concerts for their members and for missionary work.<sup>68</sup> Not only groups, but individual artists presented performances, and are featured in the newspaper. In particular, London-based Korean Western classical musicians that included Joo Hyung-ki, Djong Victorin Yu, Kim So-Ock, and the Lee sisters – Hae-A, Sung-A, and Su-A – gave concerts for members of the community publicised through the Korean Weekly. The Korean Residents Society also organised several events, including music concerts.<sup>69</sup>



**Figure 3.2. Performance at the embassy’s event ‘Visit Korea’ in 2001 (courtesy of the Embassy of the Republic of Korea).**

During this period, the Embassy of the Republic of Korea played a significant role in promoting Korean culture, organising events directly. In March 1994, 30 dancers came to Europe with the support of Korea National Tourism Corporation

<sup>66</sup> *Korean Weekly*, 1 July 1993.

<sup>67</sup> *Korean Weekly*, 28 October 1993.

<sup>68</sup> Youn Hwa *cheongsonyeon eumakhoe* (Youn Hwa youth music concert), 17 May 1996 at Bourne Hall, Surrey; *Ealing hanin gyohoe ga-eul dae-eumakhoe* (Autumn music concert of Ealing Korean church), 12 October at Haven Green Baptist Church.

<sup>69</sup> *Hanin eumakhoe* (Koreans’ concert) on 1 February 1997 at Bourne Hall, Surrey.

to support the national campaign, *Visit Korea 1994*. They demonstrated traditional dance in several London venues.<sup>70</sup> In the same year, Ahn Sook-Sun, a *pansori* (epic storytelling through song) virtuoso, was invited to perform at the London South Bank Centre and Queen's University in Belfast (she had previously performed and given workshops across Britain in 1988 and 1990). Korean musicians specializing in Western classical music also gave concerts, including Jo Sumi (b.1962),<sup>71</sup> Chung Myung-whun (b.1953),<sup>72</sup> and Sarah Chang (b.1980).<sup>73</sup> For some large-scale events, the embassy received sponsorship from major Korean companies such as Daewoo,<sup>74</sup> Kumho,<sup>75</sup> and Samsung.<sup>76</sup> It also organised 10 days of cultural events to celebrate the opening of the Korean exhibition room at the British Museum in 1997.<sup>77</sup> The embassy's cultural initiatives were inherited by the Korean Cultural Centre UK with the opening of its centre in 2008, and from then on the embassy focused on media and public relations.

In October 1993, the *Hanyeong Munhwawon* (Korean Cultural Centre in Britain, KCCB) was set up in New Malden. The KCCB was different from the (later) Korean Cultural Centre UK (KCCUK), founded by the Korean government in 2008, and it can be regarded as the first Korean cultural organisation in the UK. It was run by a Korean couple, Kim Chang-jin (a.k.a CJ) and Moon Hyun-soo. They came to the UK in the 1960s after CJ had finished studying medicine in Germany. CJ began studying history in Britain, and did not return to Korea after graduation, settling instead in New Malden and running a duty-free retail shop in central London. In 1979, CJ became head teacher of the London Korean School, in addition to his main income-providing job. While working at the school over a seven-year period, he was invited to local schools to give presentations on Korea. At that time, there were few Koreans in Britain – this was before the formation of Koreatown – and so British locals around Kingston and New Malden knew very

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<sup>70</sup> *Korean Weekly*, 17 March 1994.

<sup>71</sup> 19 July 1997 at Queen Elizabeth Hall, South Bank Centre, London.

<sup>72</sup> 11 February 1996 at Barbican Centre.

<sup>73</sup> 15 February 1996 at Royal Festival Hall.

<sup>74</sup> 13 February 1996 at Royal Festival Hall.

<sup>75</sup> Two concerts were organised; one on 7 May 1996 at St. Thomas Church in Newcastle, and the other on 9 May 1996 at St. John's Smith Square in London.

<sup>76</sup> 12 November 1995 at Barbican Centre.

<sup>77</sup> *Korean Weekly*, 10 July 1997.

little about Korea. As the number of Korean students grew in the area in the 1970s, locals began to develop an interest in Korea, and schools wanted their students to be exposed to Korean culture and history. However, limited educational materials existed; there was, of course, no Internet at that time. According to CJ, many students and even teachers considered Korea as a poverty-stricken country because of their knowledge of Korea during the Korean War and due to television programmes, such as *M.A.S.H.*, which was far from the truth by the 1980s. Also, there were cases of British students bullying Koreans due to misconceptions left over from the image of the Korean War in the 1950s. Thus, CJ decided to visit schools and teach about Korean history and culture to raise awareness of the positive aspects of today's Korea. After visits, he observed British students changed their perceptions and their attitudes towards Korean students.

Kim's cultural activities were not limited to schools. By virtue of Moon, his wife, having majored in traditional Korean dance, the couple were invited to lecture about Korean culture. There was also a *gayageum* (Korean zither) player in Britain, Paek Inok, who performed with her then-husband Keith Howard. In interview, Moon recalled her experiences of the time:

Once the centre opened, we received several requests for presentations on Korean culture for diverse range of events. I cannot forget dancing the *buchaechum* (fan dance) in front of Queen Elizabeth II and her really liking it. I also taught Korean dance and songs to Korean children, and was excited when they performed at those events. At that time, our community media and news networks were not well developed and so now, unfortunately, not many materials survive from the old days about our activities. We could not run the centre in a very professional way in terms of recording and archiving our activities, as we had our own job jobs to do in addition to running the centre (interview, July 2016, Kingston).

Drawing on his experience, CJ realised that culture was the fastest way to introduce and promote Korea within British society. He felt the necessity to promote culture in a formal manner, hence established the KCCB in October 1993. The Centre was housed in a two-storey building in New Malden, and ran diverse cultural programmes which included traditional music, dance, and cookery

classes. They sometimes organised music performances in collaboration with SOAS, and the help of Keith Howard. Also, there were regular film events, which were hugely popular among Koreans since access to Korean media from abroad was very limited at that time.

## 제1기 한영문화원 교양강좌 안내


■ 기 간 : 1993. 10. 4 - 12. 18 (11주)

1. 영 어 : 성인반 (£33) 주1회	수,목 09:45 - 11:45 (요일 자유 선택)
2. 영 어 : 어린이반 (£80) 주1회	목,금 16:30 - 18:30 (요일 자유 선택)
3. 한국어 : 외국인반 (£50)	수 19:00 - 21:00
4. 꽃꽂이 : 영국식 (£50)	화 09:45 - 11:45
5. 한국 고전 무용 (£50)	월 09:45 - 11:45

기타 한영문화원에서는 재영 한인들 위하여  
도서관 운영, 전시 및 세미나, 문화 행사를 주  
관하고 후원합니다.

**TEL : (081) 241-0990**  
**(081) 398-3831(저녁)**  
**FAX : (081) 241-0433**

Anglo-Korean Cultural Institute  
St. Anselm House,  
240, Burlington Road, New Malden,  
Surrey KT3 4NN



**Figure 3.3. Advertisement of cultural classes of the Korean Cultural Centre in Britain on the Korean Weekly in 1993 (courtesy of the Korean Weekly).**

The KCCB received a large number of requests for cultural performances from private companies, public agencies and embassies. While CJ managed the administration, Moon performed traditional dance. In addition to these performances, the KCCB organised the Anglo-Korean Summer Festival to introduce Korean culture to the British public, increase appreciation and understanding, and educate younger Koreans. The first festival was held on 15 July 1995 between 12pm and 7pm at three different venues – the KCCB building, Sacred Heart Roman Catholic Primary School, and Kingston University. It presented Korean movies, music, dance, exhibitions and Taekwondo martial arts demonstrations. The second festival was held on 13 July 1996 and followed a similar format. In 1997, the third festival was organised at a bigger venue, Fairfield Park, with a wider variety of programmes which included a traditional Korean wedding ceremony and Go tournament as well as representative Korean performances such as *samulnori* (Korean percussion quartet performance), *buchaechum* (fan dance), and Taekwondo. According to CJ and Moon, many Koreans wore *hanbok* (traditional Korean costumes), and there was a party

atmosphere. However, they also mentioned that organising cultural events during that period was not easy due to the very limited number of Korean musicians and dancers living in London. Keith Howard, who taught at SOAS, helped by providing Korean instruments and organising *samulnori* performances with his students. The festival was successful in terms of the large number of participants involved, numbering approximately 2,000.<sup>78</sup> CJ and Moon explained to me the reason why they ran the centre:

Before opening the centre, we were running a retail shop and worked seven days a week. We were well-off, but felt like we had become slaves to money, so decided to start running cultural activities, which was what we really wanted to do. The pleasure of making money and that of introducing Korean culture to the wider public to bring about a change in the perception of Korea are totally different. It was very rewarding. However, running the centre was getting more difficult due to the increasing expenditure every year. The centre itself was run at our own expense with volunteers and did not receive any subsidies from the government, apart from the Anglo-Korean Summer Festivals which were sponsored by the Korean Tourism Organisation and the British Tourism Authority. After a few years, we realised that this work should be managed not by an individual but by an organisation, and handed the responsibility over to the Korean Residents Society (interview, July 2016, Kingston).

It is not surprising that CJ and Moon regarded themselves as cultural pioneers, as they promoted Korean culture for such a long time. The Korean embassy at that time had neither the budget nor the workers to promote culture. Thus, it can be said that the KCCB acted as a cultural agent in place of the Korean embassy. Unfortunately, however, they could not continue the project, and in 1998 had to close the centre due to the financial burden and heavy workload.

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<sup>78</sup> *Korean Weekly*, 20 July 1995.





**Figure 3.4. The Anglo-Korean Festival organised by the KCCB in 1996 in the Korean Weekly (courtesy of Korean Weekly).**

In 1997, many Asian countries, including Korea, experienced an economic crisis. Over 60 percent of the Koreans who had been living in the UK returned back to Korea due to the weakened Korean currency.<sup>79</sup> Despite the recession at home, Korean cultural events continued in London. The successor to the Anglo-Korean Summer Festival run by KCCB was a new festival organised by the Korean Residents Society under the name of the Korean Food Festival. It was first held at Fairfield Park on 5 September 1998. It was the first large-scale festival organised by the KRS, with over 20 Korean restaurants and companies participating. In the following year, the name changed to the Korean Cultural Festival and it was held on 17 July at the same venue. Eventually, it became an official annual Korean Festival, held around the time of the National Liberation Day of Korea (15 August). Not only Koreans, but many locals as well as British Veterans of the Korean War would be invited to enjoy Korean cultural presentations.

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<sup>79</sup> *The Korean Financial Crisis of 1997 – A Strategy of Financial Sector Reform*, Working Paper of the International Monetary Fund, March 1999, accessed 23 November 2017.



### 3.2. Progression (2002-2008)

The financial crisis of 1997 did not last long due to Korea's internal campaign to overcome the situation, and in 2001 all loans from the IMF were repaid.<sup>80</sup> In 2002, Koreans all over the world gathered together to cheer for their home country during the World Cup – held jointly in Korea and Japan. Whenever Korea played, Koreans in the UK gathered to support their team at the Fountain Pub in New Malden, wearing red shirts, waving the national flag, and playing traditional Korean percussion instruments.<sup>81</sup>

The Korean Residents Society (KRS) continued to organise cultural events a few times every year, and the end-of-year party and the Korean Festival happened regularly. End-of-year parties were always held in December, renting a hall such as the Malden Centre or the Tolworth Recreation Centre, and aimed at creating an occasion for Koreans to socialise by sharing food and singing songs. The programmes changed depending on members' suggestions. According to a newspaper article, the end-of-year party in 2006 was held in a different way from usual, as a music competition.<sup>82</sup>

The Korean Festival continued under the KRS. Since it was their main annual cultural event, they prepared many programmes comprising both regular and special performances. Performances such as Taekwondo demonstrations, *samulnori*, and *buchaechum*, which were considered familiar to the audiences, were presented almost every year by community members. Different musicians and performance teams were invited from Korea each year. Bringing artists required a large budget, yet the KRS was able to do this as they could get more

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<sup>80</sup> 'On the occasion of Korea's scheduled early repayment on 23 August 2001 of the final installment of SDR (Special Drawing Rights) £111.2 million (about US\$142.3 million) outstanding from SDR 14.4 billion (about US\$19.5 billion) drawn from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) under an SDR 15.5 billion (about US\$21 billion) stand-by credit.'  
<http://www.imf.org/en/News/Articles/2015/09/29/18/03/nb0182>, accessed 23 November 2017.

<sup>81</sup> Kim Seho, "*Yeongguk hanintawun nyumoldeun, ollimpik chukgu eungwon yeolgi tteugeowo* (Koreatown New Malden in Britain, the Olympic football cheer is very enthusiastic)", 2 August 2012,  
[http://eknews.net/xenews/journal\\_special/400221](http://eknews.net/xenews/journal_special/400221), accessed 13 October 2020.

<sup>82</sup> EKNEWS, "*Jeayeong haninhoe songnyeong yeollin eumakhoe daeseonghwang* (The success of the KRSUK's year-end concert)", 22 December 2006,  
<http://www.eknews.net/xenews/57527>, accessed 13 October 2020.

sponsorship than the KCCB had been able to, as they were an official overseas Korean organisation and received financial support from the South Korean government.



**Figure 3.5. Pungmul performance at the Korean Festival in 2012 (courtesy of the Euro Journal).**

However, the planning did not always proceed smoothly. Despite there being committee members and other representatives in charge of cultural events, they faced difficulties organising large-scale events because they lacked experience and expertise. According to an article about the festival in 2003, some programmes which had been meant to be held did not happen or were delayed, and things looked unprofessional in general.<sup>83</sup> Due to such issues, the KRS invited a professional event organiser to manage the festival. However, she confessed in interview that it was no easy task to organise the programme due to continual interference by KRS committee members, which made her decide not to participate in later KRS events.

Apart from the KRS, two organisations, the Korean Anglican Community Centre Limited (KACC) and the Korean Cultural Promotion Agency (KCPA), took

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<sup>83</sup> Lee Yeon-ok, "*Annae chaekjaman hwaryeohaetdeon hanin chukje-e danyeowaseo* (After visiting the Korean Festival where only the brochures were fancy)", 28 August 2003, <http://www.kowekly.co.uk/news.php?code=&mode=view&num=1069>, accessed 23 January 2018.

on major roles in raising awareness and bringing Korean-related festivals to London. The KACC was founded in 2000 jointly by the Anglican Church of Korea and its members within the Church of England, and registered as a charity organisation in 2003 (No.1096690), and its centre was located in Warren Street. The KACC primarily aimed to promote Christianity to Korean nationals in and outside of England and Wales, to relieve poverty, sickness and distress, and to advance education.<sup>84</sup> Beyond religion, they provided various services for Koreans living in London and promoted Korean culture to the mainstream UK society. They started to organise the London Korean Film Festival in 2001, which became the centrepiece of the London Korean Festival, and ran every year until 2006.<sup>85</sup>

Date	Event title
Sat 20 May	Opening event: Crying Nut play at the Mean Fiddler
Mon 22 – Fri 26 May	London Korean Film Festival
Sat 27 May	Korean Day at the Victoria & Albert Museum
Mon 29 May – Sat 3 Jun	Traditional yet Contemporary ceramics exhibition
Mon 5 Jun	Kim Chang-nam on Modern Korean Culture

**Table 3.3. List of events organised by CnE in 2006.**

Oh Tae-min worked for the KACC from 2003, running the festival as its director. Finding data in relation to the festival has proven difficult, as the organisation has now ceased operation, but some records survived on the website *London Korean Link*.<sup>86</sup> In 2004, the festival programme comprised a classical concert performed by Park In-Soo, a rock concert by Kim Jong-Seo, and the Korean Film Festival.<sup>87</sup> In

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<sup>84</sup>

<http://apps.charitycommission.gov.uk/Showcharity/RegisterOfCharities/RemovedCharityMain.aspx?RegisteredCharityNumber=1096690&SubsidiaryNumber=0>, accessed 18 January 2018.

<sup>85</sup> Philip Gowman, "London Korean Festival 2006 – an introduction", 16 August 2017, <https://londonkoreanlinks.net/2017/08/16/london-korean-festival-2006-2/>, accessed 13 October 2020.

<sup>86</sup> <http://londonkoreanlinks.net>, accessed 13 October 2020.

<sup>87</sup> Philip Gowman, "London Korean Festival + Film Festival 2004", 26 April 2004, <http://londonkoreanlinks.net/2004/04/26/the-london-korean-festival-2004>, accessed 13 October 2020.

2005, Oh set up a private company, CnE (Culture and Entertainment) Limited,<sup>88</sup> and organised the festival with his team in 2006, independently of the KACC. The festival increased in size that year, running for two weeks with some support from the Korean embassy. The schedule is given in Table 3.3.

It was the last and only festival organised by Oh Tae-min and his team. Regarding the closure of their activities, Philip Gowman, head of London Korean Links, speculated that running the festival would not have been easy due to the increasing involvement in cultural promotion of the embassy as they prepared to establish the new Korean Cultural Centre UK; this might well have led to a decrease in funding for the private cultural sector.<sup>89</sup>

A further organisation, the KCPA, was founded by Jang Jung-eun (a.k.a. Justina Jang), and played a significant role during this period. Justina had come to the UK in 1993 for academic study, and once helped CJ in running the KCCB. After finishing her Master's degree in Culture Policy and Management at City University, she returned to Korea due to the economic crisis. While there, she worked at the LG Arts Centre in Seoul and built her career as a director. She returned to London in 2000 to begin a doctoral course, but could not finish it due to personal reasons. Instead, in 2003 she decided to set up a non-profit organisation called Nori Productions Limited (UK Charity No.1103564)<sup>90</sup> with the aim of promoting traditional and contemporary Korean culture. Nori Productions promoted various activities divided into three types; cultural programmes, arts education, and encouraging creativity through artistic collaboration. She organised 15 events in total until 2008, which are listed in Table 3.4. The first project was *Namsadang*, a traditional Korean troupe of music and puppetry which was brought from Korea to perform at the Royal Festival Hall. Three years from its foundation, Nori Productions changed its name to the Korean Cultural Promotion

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<sup>88</sup> <http://companycheck.co.uk/company/05602471/CNE---CULTURE--ENTERTAINMENT-LIMITED/companies-house-data>, accessed 18 January 2018.

<sup>89</sup> Philip Gowman, "London Korean Festival 2006 – an introduction", 16 August 2017, <http://londonkoreanlinks.net/2017/08/16/london-korean-festival-2006-2>, accessed 13 October 2020.

<sup>90</sup>

<http://apps.charitycommission.gov.uk/Showcharity/RegisterOfCharities/RemovedCharityMain.aspx?RegisteredCharityNumber=1103564&SubsidiaryNumber=0>, accessed 18 January 2018.

Agency (KCPA).

Date	Event Title (Venue)
Oct 2003	Namsadang (Southbank Centre)
Jun 2004	Dano 2004 Korean Breeze (Southbank Centre)
Nov 2004	Experience Korean Traditional Music (Southbank Centre)
Jun 2005 July 2005	Dano 2005 Korean Breeze (University of Sheffield, Sheffield; British Museum & Southbank Centre, London) Workshop of Korean Percussion (Kingston and SOAS)
Sep 2005	A night with Kang Tae-Hwan (The Spitz)
May 2006	Dano 2006 Korean Breeze (Holywell Music Room, Oxford; Bloomsbury Theatre, London; West Road Concert Hall, Cambridge)
Jul 2006	Samulnori: Rhythm sticks 2006 (Southbank Centre)
Sep 2006	Fantasia: Explore Korean Traditional Dance (Bloomsbury Theatre, London; Royal Northern College of Music, Manchester)
Oct 2006	Experience Korean Contemporary Music (SOAS and Royal Academy of Music)
Nov 2006	Contemporary Jazz, Free Music & Improvisation (The Spitz and Southbank Centre)
Dec 2006	The National Centre for Korean Traditional Performing Arts (Royal Northern College of Music, Manchester; Fairfield Concert Hall, Croydon)
Jun 2007	Korean traditional art exhibition (Artspace – Galleries)
Jun 2007	Dano Korea Sparkling Summer Festival (Trafalgar Square)
Jun 2008	Dano Seoul Day (Trafalgar Square)
Nov 2008	A night with Baramgot (Barbican Centre)

**Table 3.4. List of events organised by the KCPA (including Nori Production).**

The biggest event Nori/KCPA organised was the Dano Festival. They tried to hold it annually. *Dano* is an early summer festival on 5 May of the lunar calendar and one of the four important Korean traditional holidays: the others being *Seollal* (Korean New Year's Day), *Hansik* (the 105<sup>th</sup> day after the winter solstice), and *Chuseok* (Korean Harvest). It was originally observed in China, but became a national celebration native to Korea wishing for a good harvest and featuring traditional Korean cultural ceremonies such as washing one's hair with sweet flag, women playing on a swing and men taking part in Korean wrestling. Nori/KCPA designated Dano as the representative Korean carnival, and held annual festivals from 2004 to 2008. It received support from several major organisations including the Mayor of London, the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of Korea, the

Embassy of the Republic of Korea, the Korean Cultural Centre UK<sup>91</sup> and the Korean National Office of Tourism. The festival aimed to be as big as the Chinese New Year Festival in London, and was held in major theatres and venues across London such as the South Bank Centre, the British Museum, and, latterly, Trafalgar Square. It was held not only in London, but also in Oxford, Sheffield, and Manchester. Nori/KCPA organised education programmes such as Korean percussion workshops and a lecture on Korean music as a part of the annual events, and arranged collaborations between Korean and British musicians under the title of ‘Experience Korean Contemporary Music’ and ‘Improvised Music’.



**Figure 3.6. Dano Festival posters 2004-2007 (author's collection).**

<sup>91</sup> Although the KCCUK was officially founded in 2008, staff were hired before its opening and worked at the embassy.

The KCPA contributed to promote Korea. Comparing her activities with the events organised by the KCCB, Jung notes that the scale became much bigger. She brought events into the British mainstream and hosted them successfully based on her previous experience. It was the first time that Korean-related events organised by local Korean residents were held in central London. The target audience also embraced a larger British public, rather than just the Korean community and Kingston residents.

The festivals were successful in terms of the number of participants, yet the KCPA had persistent financial difficulties. Although they received sponsorship from several organisations, the funding available could barely meet the running expenses. Also, as the KCPA was a charity, it could not focus on generating income. Furthermore, as with the CnE, receiving sponsorship was becoming more difficult and the workload proved too burdensome for Justina. Thus, the agency stopped their activities in 2009 and finally closed in 2011. However, Justina resumed Korean cultural activities again in Kingston in 2016 under the banner of the Korean British Cultural Exchange, which will be discussed in Chapter 4.

### **3.3. Diversification (2008-2014)**

Korean cultural activities expanded, and in this third period divide into two broad efforts. The first was the Korean Cultural Centre UK (KCCUK) and the other the Korean community. They both promoted Korean culture yet diverged markedly in terms of their locations and target audience. KCCUK events were usually held in Central London and targeted everyone interested in Korean culture, while Korean community events were arranged in Kingston and focused on Koreans and residents of the area.

The KCCUK was founded in 2008 by the Korean Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism. It is one of 32 Korean Cultural Centres in 27 countries,<sup>92</sup> and is located near Trafalgar Square in a building once home to the management of Shell with the prestigious address, 1 Northumberland Avenue. The role of the KCCUK is to enhance friendship, amity and understanding between Korea and the UK through cultural and educational activities.<sup>93</sup> Prior to setting up the KCCUK, the

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<sup>92</sup> <http://www.kocis.go.kr/eng/openGreetings.do>, accessed 5 February 2020.

<sup>93</sup> <http://london.korean-culture.org/en/7/contents/107>, accessed 30

Korean Embassy took responsibility for cultural events, though this could often not be done well due to the limited number of professional staff available. For this reason, Koreans were keen to set up the KCCUK. The local group Korean Artists Association UK proposed the founding of the KCCUK in 1999 and petitioned for it to be set up in 2000.<sup>94</sup> When the former South Korean president, Roh Moohyun, came to the UK on a state visit in 2004, he received a proposal for the establishment of the Korean Cultural Centre from the Korean residents association, and vowed to push this forward. Eventually, the establishment was approved by the South Korean government, and an officer from the Ministry of Culture began to work from 2006 at the Korean Embassy, preparing to open the centre, as well as taking over organising the Korean Film Festival.

Between 2006 and 2007, his staff looked for an appropriate site. Several were proposed in the vicinity of South Kensington and Euston. Woo Sang-ho, a Member of the Korean National Assembly at that time, was asked to set up the centre at Holy Trinity Church on Marylebone Road, in cooperation with the KACC, with a lease costing £1 million for 125 years. He insisted that this was a good deal in terms of the price and location.<sup>95</sup> However, there were objections: it was not independent of religious influence and not in close proximity to the Korean community.<sup>96</sup> The plan was shelved after an inspection by the Korean Embassy in December 2005. Five reasons were given: it was far from the Korean community; it was difficult to make it fit for multi-purpose use; there was an expected excessive expenditure on maintenance; there were issues with durability and utilisation; there were anticipated difficulties regarding marketing, structural alterations, and audience mobilisation.<sup>97</sup> After more deliberation, the current

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November 2017.

<sup>94</sup> <http://koreanartists.co.uk/kaaauk-events/>, accessed 30 November 2017.

<sup>95</sup> Sung Kiyong, "*Leondeon koriasenteo sanpayeok yeollin wuridang uiwon wusangho* (Woo Sangho, MP of the Uri Party, charged sponsor for the London Korea Centre)", 28 July 2005, <http://shindonga.donga.com/3/all/13/104661/1>, accessed 20 October 2020.

<sup>96</sup> Korean Weekly, "*Teukjeong gyohoereul hanin senteoro georonhadani* (Talking about a specific church as a Korean centre)", 30 June 2005, <http://www.kowekly.co.uk/news.php?code=&mode=view&num=3208&page=12&wr=KNK>, accessed 19 January 2018.

<sup>97</sup> Korean Weekly, "*Leondeon munhwawon gyohoe geonmul ipju gaewon eopdeon illo* (Opening the Korean Cultural Centre in London at the church has



building off Trafalgar Square was selected. Contracts were signed with the completion date set for 2007, and with a 15-year lease.

Since it opened in January 2008, the KCCUK has organised various cultural events, education programmes, and exhibitions across diverse fields including music, literature, film, performance and the Korean language. According to Roh ByungHyun, a KCCUK staff, it organises an average of 280 events annually, which means that the centre runs programmes almost every day, excluding public holidays.<sup>98</sup> I have asked for records of the events, but as they are building an archive for a new website, have only seen incomplete records. Their website in 2017 lists only 38 music-related events hosted between January 2008 and December 2014.<sup>99</sup> Exploring the lists, these divide into three genres: traditional Korean music, Western classical music, and K-pop.

In its early days, many events were held to match Korean traditional holidays, such as Lunar New Year and *Chuseok*, mainly using traditional Korean music (*gugak*). *Changjak gugak* (creative traditional music) performances were also organised, the list suggesting these were given three times as often as *gugak*. I assume this reflected the limited repertoires of *gugak*, and a desire to present a contemporary version of *gugak*. Most extant *gugak* pieces are from the fifteenth century or, at least, are old, and their number is not large, while *changjak gugak* pieces are released almost on a daily basis by young musicians and are becoming increasingly popular in Korea and beyond. With *changjak gugak* repertoires, the KCCUK is able to show uniqueness in Korean music, but in a way that might be more suitable to a contemporary palate than *gugak*.

According to the KCCUK website, the centre did not present Western classical music until late 2010. Of course, there were many classical concerts performed by Koreans going on, but the centre only took a limited role, not organising such events themselves, but promoting them on their website. The first classical concert which the centre organised was 'The Year-End Concert – Kim Sun-wook's Piano Recital', held at the centre in December 2010. Thereafter,

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cancelled)", 22 December 2005,  
<http://www.kowekly.co.uk/news.php?code=&mode=view&num=3637>,  
accessed 19 January 2018.

<sup>98</sup> Interviewed in January 2019 at the KCCUK.

<sup>99</sup> Data gathered in 2017 from the KCCUK website, now deleted.

classical music performances were organised from time to time, and became a regular showpiece of the centre in 2016.



**Figure3.7. K-pop Academy in 2014 (courtesy of the KCCUK).**

Since 2011, the centre began to put on K-pop events, such as K-pop nights and contests, in line with its rising popularity. In 2011, a famous idol group, SHINEE, was invited to open the 6th London Korean Film Festival in a concert presented by the KCCUK. K-pop contests were held for three years in a row, in which many K-pop fans participated. These developed into an annual regional event of the K-pop World Festival, and many participated in cover dancing and singing, some going on to the finals in Korea. The centre launched its K-pop Academy in 2012, which is a 10- to 12-weeks course learning about Korea's history, culture, and language as well as music. It was first organised by the KCCUK among all the Korean Cultural Centres worldwide, and was selected as 'Best Programme' by the Korean government for its cultural exchange efforts. It has proved to be one of the most popular KCCUK programmes, and continues to have a highly competitive enrolment process. K-pop events have been very well-received, and remain one of the main centre activities.

Apart from the music concerts listed above, the centre has organised events that embrace Korea's culture. One notable event was the Thames Festival, a two-day annual festival managed by the Thames Festival Trust, along the South Bank and Bankside held from 1997 to 2012. The centre took part in this from 2008 to 2012, presenting a wide range of Korean culture, from traditional games and food demonstrations to various performances.

Date	Event Title
13-14 Sep 2008	The Korean New Moon Festival
12-13 Sep 2009	A Scoop of Korea
11-12 Sep 2010	All Eyes on Korea
10-11 Sep 2011	Korea Calling
8-9 Sep 2012	All Eyes on Korea

**Table 3.5. List of Korean cultural events organised by the KCCUK for the Thames Festival between 2008-2012.**



**Figure 3.8. All eyes on Korea in 2012 at the Tate Modern (courtesy of the KCCUK).**

The title of their event changed every year, but the concept and programme remained similar. Those who came to the festival were not only able to watch a variety of music concerts, but were also able to get first-hand experience of activities, becoming more than just a passive observer, participating in Taekwondo, playing traditional Korean instruments, food tasting and so on. Especially, *All Eyes on Korea* in 2012 was held on an unprecedented scale lasting 100 days during the London Olympics. Dividing its contributions into five categories – Korean music, fashion, art, literature, and film – the KCCUK tried to attract not only audiences from London, but also guests from across the globe. According to the statistics published by the KCCUK, the festival produced a 45 percent increase in visits to the KCCUK Facebook page, up to an average of 17,700



per week, and 35,000 visitors enjoyed the festival events. However, the KCCUK decided to no longer participate after 2012, as the Thames Festival changed direction to become a one-month exhibition under the new name, *Totally Thames*, which launched in 2014, moving its location from central to suburban London.



**Figure 3.9. Programme of the New Malden Arts Festival in 2014 (author's collection).**

The Korean community has also continued to host their own cultural events. Their activities divide into three depending on the hosts; the Korean Residence Society (KRS), Theatre 4 All, and the North Korean Residents Society (NKRS). The KRS kept running their activities, including end-of-year parties and festivals. The latter was meant to be annual, yet it could not happen regularly and ended in 2013 due to a dispute (mentioned above). At the time, there was an absence of an expert to take charge of cultural events. As pointed out earlier in this chapter, running a large-scale festival would be burdensome for those who do not have prior experience or knowledge. Theatre for All (T4A), a non-profits arts organisation and registered charity (No.1136906), was founded by Shin Bona in 2006 to promote community cohesion and create opportunities for equal access to rich cultural and educational programmes.<sup>100</sup> Shin came to the UK in 1994, graduated with a BA in Drama from the University of Hull and an MA in Arts

<sup>100</sup> <http://www.theatre4all.com>, accessed 1 December 2017.

Administration and Cultural Policy from Goldsmiths, University of London. After graduation, she founded T4A and organised cultural projects, including the New Malden Arts Festival (NMAF), which was an annual local event that ran for nine years from 2007 to 2015. The first NMAF in 2007 was organised with the help of her friends from university, and more and more local residents participated each year. It was held every summer with a broad range of programmes from art exhibitions, talking concerts, school workshops, and film screenings to diverse music concerts. Unlike other Korean festivals that only consisted of Korean culture, the NMAF took on the character of a local festival, presenting the multicultural diversity of the area, New Malden, and enlisting local participants. The festivals embraced all local people, in addition to Koreans living there, and were very well-received.<sup>101</sup>

The North Korean community also organised cultural activities in a similar way to the South Koreans, organising events which included end-of-year parties, athletic meets, and the anniversaries of their associations' founding. Every year, over 100 participants enjoy the party. The party began with a management report and the association's plan for the coming year, and continued with a banquet and talent show competition. They brought and shared North Korean food, which was reminiscent of their home, and sang Korean songs, all dancing together, and the party lasted all evening.<sup>102</sup> Even during their split, the two organisations, the North Korean Residents Society and the Korean Nationality Residents Society, held these events. The KNRS, in particular, tried to reach a concord with South Koreans and local communities in Kingston, in compliance with the principles of the association. They often organised end-of-year parties with the other Korean associations, and the second anniversary of the KNRS's founding in 2016 – which was attended by the Mayor of Kingston, the former British Ambassador to North Korea, and heads of South Korean associations. Members of the KNRS prepared typical North Korean food and organised music performances such as playing the cello, *gayageum*, singing and a children's choir.

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<sup>101</sup> See Chapter 4 for more on this.

<sup>102</sup> Kim Guk-hwa, "*Yeongguk talbukmindeurui hanhae mamuri* (The end of the year of North Korean refugees in Britain)," 27 December 2013, [https://www.rfa.org/korean/weekly\\_program/eu\\_defector/co-dk-12272013113021.html](https://www.rfa.org/korean/weekly_program/eu_defector/co-dk-12272013113021.html), accessed 20 October 2020.



**Figure 3.10. End-of-year party of the North Korean community in 2017 (author's collection).**

#### **4. Discussion**

These cultural activities were the result of years of effort and the dedicated devotion of numerous individuals. The members of the KCCB were pioneers when Korean culture was almost unknown in the UK. Although organising events at that time was not easy due to the limited materials, availability, as well as mobility and technology, the KCCB held its own cultural event for the first time in Britain in 1995, continuing for three additional years. In the second phase, the KACC, CnE, and Nori/KCPA brought cultural events to Central London, giving members of the public opportunities to experience an eclectic mix of Korean culture. Nori/KCPA especially contributed to introducing Korean culture to the British mainstream, enriching cultural diversity by holding events in well-known locations and spreading their activities beyond London. In the third stage, the Korean cultural scene became ever more diversified and specialised. Establishing the KCCUK enabled more frequent and various culture presentations all year round. All these activities clearly demonstrate that traditional music and dance has played a significant role as *superculture*, using Slobin's model, from the early stage of the formation of the Korean diaspora in London.

One of the distinctive aspects of Korean cultural events in London during

the initial period was the organisers of the events. According to Anderson Sutton's 1987 research on Korean community culture in Hawai'i (1987, 115), most events there were led by individual artists and lasted for an extended time. This resulted in events focusing only on artistic pursuits. However, it was different in London, where events were mostly organised by cultural promoters, rather than by artists. Hence, more diverse cultural programming was available, and this included inviting artists from Korea to supplement the participation of local artists.

Another prominent feature is that Korean cultural activities were outward looking from the beginning. Where Zheng mentions that early Chinese immigrants to New York had inward-turning attitudes in their activities, and where newer groups that emerged would later take a more outgoing approach, giving public demonstrations and performances (2010, 108). Korean cultural activities in Britain aimed to introduce Korean culture to a wider audience from the very beginning, as shown from the activities of the KCCB. Cultural classes offered by the KCCB can be considered as more introverted activities to generate unity within the community but, while this is true to some extent, these activities were designed to allow presentations at events, thus their extroverted attitude should be considered more significant.

## CHAPTER 4

### Multiple Levels of Musical Activities 1: Festivals and Events

Paul Willis (2014, 21) asserts that music and social behaviour have structural similarities, and that music is an active ingredient of social formation. These are the findings of his study into the musical practice of the two groups, motor-bike boys and hippies. DeNora also writes that ‘music is in dynamic relation with social life, helping to invoke, stabilize and change the parameters of agency, collective and individual’ (2000, 20). Indeed, music is closely related to a society, and plays a pivotal role in social formation. Particularly for migrant groups, music is used to bring members of the community together and strengthen the unity of the group itself (Baily 1999, 12). This can be observed in several diasporic communities. For instance, the Chinese migrant community in America runs several musical groups, which unify community members through sharing musical sounds and nostalgic sentiments (Zheng 2010, 171). Averill (1997) also demonstrates how playing in a steelband in the West Indian community in New York constructs ethnic solidarity among youth. These accounts are mirrored by what happens with Koreans in the US. Exploring the *pungmul* (traditional percussion band music and dance) scene, Kwon (2001, 16) argues that music plays a dominant role in keeping Koreans throughout the country connected, explaining this in terms of four aspects: becoming one as Korean Americans, sharing/gathering, creating a space to develop Korean American culture, and connecting a culture/sound/spirit. Can these be applied also to the Korean diaspora in London? Does Koreans in London possess any cultural distinctiveness? In this chapter, thus, the cultural festivals and events of Koreans in London between 2015 and 2018 will be explored. First of all, activities are divided into two main types, depending on the group who implemented them, whether it was the official Korean government or the immigrant community; this extends my discussion from the previous chapter. I detail community activities utilising both quantitative and qualitative methods, in order to clarify how events were organised and what the effects of the events were.



## 1. The Korean Cultural Centre UK

The Embassy of the Republic of Korea used to run cultural events to promote Korea. However, especially since the KCCUK opened in 2008, all government-sponsored cultural events have been directly organised by the KCCUK. Events held between 2008 and 2014 were explored in the previous chapter, so, here, focus will be placed on the events conducted from 2015 to 2017, investigating the manner in which activities were organised, what changed and the reasons for change.

2015 marked the eighth year since the KCCUK was established and there were two notable musical events that year: the London Korean Festival 2015 and the K-music Festival. The first was a large-scale one-off event which took place in Trafalgar Square on 9 August. Upon arriving at 12:30pm, I found the venue already filled with an expectant audience. The festival was planned to showcase diverse fields of Korea culture. A number of booths for experiencing Korean games, animation, music, and fashion were arranged on one side of the square. Food stalls were on both sides of the square, catering to long queues of visitors. Performances were presented on the main stage from 12:30pm to 8pm, following three themes. The first section was between 12:30pm and 3:15pm, with the theme 'Connecting with Korea's Traditions'. It began with *gillori* (a traditional opening ceremonial parade), *samulnori* and *pungmul*, performed alongside traditional dances and a fashion show. The second section's theme was 'Korea-UK Now,' in which Korean contemporary and popular culture was presented. The B-boy group Jinjo Crew and the K-pop group f(x) performed, marking Korea's status as one of the most prominent sources of B-boy (and of course K-pop) in the world. There were not only Korean performances, but also collaborations between Korean and British artists: the Korean traditional performance group U-Hee collaborated with the UK band The Talks, and Jinjo Crew performed with the British B-boy group Soul Mavericks. There was also a fashion show with four London-based Korean designers participating. The theme of the third section was 'Looking to the Future', and it presented some of the earlier programmes again, along with a performance by the Korean rock band Guckkasten. The programme ended with a joint performance by all performers of *Arirang*, the national folksong of Korea and a symbol of the hoped-for reunification between the two Koreas. The

lyrics and meaning of the song were given in the programme booklet so that those who did not know it could sing along. It was at this moment that all who attended could feel a sense of unity.

After the festival, the KCCUK published a five-minute highlight video on YouTube showcasing the vivid atmosphere of the day.<sup>103</sup> According to the KCCUK, 40,000 visited the festival. By all accounts, this event was very successful in terms of its operation, audience, and response. What is therefore surprising is that the event was not held again on a similar scale in later years. In July 2017, the festival moved to an indoor venue, Olympia London. Then, its programme was divided into two, mixing free day events, which provided various Korean-related experiences including crafts, games, costumes as well as cuisine, with a ticketed evening concert performed by four K-pop idol groups. The price of concert tickets was £30 per person, but it sold out within a few hours of the tickets being released. Since the overall scale was smaller compared to the 2015 festival, and due to occupancy restrictions of the venue, there were only 12,000 attendees. However, the mood was just as vibrant as the 2015 festival.

Those two were the only large-scale one-day events organised by the KCCUK between 2015 and 2019 (when my data collection ends). Despite their success, this did not result in a regular event, due to the financial burdens. According to one KCCUK member of staff, such a festival cost an excessive amount of money equivalent to the entire annual budget of the centre.<sup>104</sup> It was therefore deemed impractical to hold the festival without substantial financial backing from external organisations. Seven Korean private companies sponsored the festival in 2015, and four Korean public enterprises and two private companies were patrons for the 2017 event.<sup>105</sup> From the point of view of the companies, annual financial support would be burdensome, while for the KCCUK, finding new sponsors for the total required budget would not be easy. Hence, the KCCUK can

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<sup>103</sup> Korean Cultural Centre UK, "London Korean Festival 2015 – Highlights Video", 9 February 2016, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dkER2ZVaPiA>, accessed 22 October 2020.

<sup>104</sup> Interview conducted in January 2019 at the KCCUK.

<sup>105</sup> The list of companies is available on <http://kccuk.org.uk/en/archive/london-korean-festival/london-korean-festival-2015-event>, and <http://kccuk.org.uk/en/archive/london-korean-festival/london-korean-festival-2017>, accessed 9 February 2020.

rarely attempt to organise such large-scale events.



**Figure 4.1. London Korean Festival 2015 (photo by the author).**

The K-Music Festival, however, has been presented since 2013, as a series of annual concerts. It has offered UK audiences the chance to experience various genres other than the now very well-known K-pop, including traditional and contemporary music. Launched in 2013 with a two-week programme, it has been held annually except in 2014 (due to the tragic incident of the Sewol ferry disaster in Korea). Fortunately, it resumed in autumn 2015, when it expanded to a one-month long event. 2015 performances included four *changjak gugak* (creative traditional music), one *gugak* (traditional Korean music), one indie, and one rock concert in venues spread across London such as at the Southbank Centre, Rich Mix, Kings Place, and Cadogan Hall. In 2016 and 2017, the programme became more varied, ranging from traditional genres to jazz. Notably, it encouraged collaborations between Korean and British musicians such as those between Park Kyungso on *gayageum* zither with jazz saxophonist Andy Sheppard, Kim Hyelim, on *daegeum* horizontal bamboo flute with violinist Alice Zawadzki, Park Woojae on *geomungo* six-stringed zither with Japanese percussionist Shogo Yoshi, and performances with Indian *sarod* lute player Soumik Datta.



**Figure 4.2. Programme of the K-Music Festival 2015 (author's collection).**

The K-Music Festival has grown each year and shows productive results in three ways. First, audience numbers kept increasing. In 2015, the KCCUK distributed a large number of free tickets for the K festival at other events, meaning there were many audience members with free or discounted tickets at the concerts. However, over time such free ticketing has become less common, and most performances are completely or almost completely sold out. According to a report published by the KCCUK, the number of paying audience members in 2016 doubled compared to the previous year, and in 2017 they achieved an average audience capacity of 79% throughout the festival, reaching around 88% in 2018. Second, the KCCUK has cooperated with British organisations in the festival. It contracts out the promotion to the local music production company Serious, so the festival can be promoted effectively. The centre has gradually earned credibility with performance venues by organising the festival regularly, leading to some successful partnerships with venues. Lastly, the festival has become a bridge between Korean musicians and UK music promoters. During the festival, the centre also organises showcases to introduce contemporary Korean music to the European music market. Jambinai, a contemporary Korean band, achieved a particular landmark success, being signed by the UK music label Bella Union following their performance at the festival in 2015.

In 2016, the KCCUK began to organise another concert series, Korean Sounds, which was to be held once every two months at Kings Place. Six performances were presented that year; three were largely Western classical performances and the other three were joint Korean and Western classical concerts. In 2017, the series held five events from April, under the title of 'East Meet West' with five sub-themes of Spring, Virtuoso, Space, Love and Dance. All performances were themed, with a programme that was half Western classical and half *gugak* or *changjak gugak*. The KCCUK had the intention of juxtaposing Korean music, still unfamiliar to most British audiences, with the already familiar Western classical music. This tactic seemed reasonable, since familiarity affects listeners to be emotionally engaged (Pereira et al. 2011). However, the performances were each, essentially, two separate concerts sharing the same stage, and after the concert, some audience members commented to me that it struck as 'East and West' rather than 'East Meets West'.

Since 2016, the KCCUK has promoted more Western classical performances than ever. The KCC House Concert Series is a case in point. It is a free concert hosted by young Korean talented musicians based in or studying in the UK, held at the reception area of the KCCUK. With two sessions in 2016, the House Concert was held every month in 2017 except for January and December, and continued throughout 2018. There has been an ambivalent reaction: some I have talked with view it as a good opportunity to experience high-quality performances for free in central London, but others feel there is little point watching Western classical music at a Korean Cultural Centre (of all places!), since their normal expectation of such a venue would be that it would host Korean-related events.

One noticeable change at the centre during the last few years is that all its educational programmes were abolished in 2017, apart from language courses. The centre had offered several classes such as calligraphy, Taekwondo, handicraft and *gayageum* zither lessons for some years. Each class attracted an average of 10 students, with not only British students, but a mix of nationalities, and courses ran from 10 weeks to a year. While most performance events were one-off, giving a brief taste of the beauty of Korean culture, these long-term classes were able to pass on in-depth understanding to those interested in Korea but living far from



the country. For instance, in the *gayageum* class in 2016, eight students managed to learn to play both Korean traditional folksongs and some contemporary pieces by the end of the year, which required intensive practice, and the acquisition of advanced skills and techniques. Some even bought their own instrument from Korea so they could continue practising themselves, as well as now having a better understanding for attending Korean concerts. However, the KCCUK decided not to run educational classes, due to issues of finding staff and a lack of facilities. Instead, they tried to organise these programmes at local adult education centres across London, including in Kingston and Hammersmith. However, this did not work well; many classes ended up being cancelled due to the low number of applicants. Feedback from previous students mentioned that the location of the classes at the KCC was convenient, easily accessible after work or after classes. However, the locations of the classes moved to were too far from central London, making them difficult to attend for those who did not happen to live in the new venue's areas.



**Figure 4.3. *Gayageum* class at the KCCUK in 2015 (courtesy of the KCCUK).**

Overall, and since 2015, the KCCUK has taken a twofold approach to its UK audience, combining uniqueness and familiarity. It has drawn in those who were not familiar with the otherness of Korean culture through K-pop and Western classical music. Its two large-scale festivals were full of K-pop fans, and the centre provided the chance to experience a more rounded culture beyond mere K-pop. Taking advantage of the large number of Korean musicians who play Western classical music in the UK, it was able to organise Korean Sounds and the House

Concert series, and to showcase the exceptional ability of Korean musicians who actively performed in the city that is one of the birthplaces of classical music.

Meanwhile, the centre has presented the uniqueness and breadth of aesthetics of Korean culture through the K-music festival, introducing quality Korean musicians to the world stage. A variety of popular music genres have been presented other than just the idol groups of K-pop. In addition, the centre demonstrated not only traditional music, but also creative traditional music, as a flourishing art, with its pieces created as a consequence of the younger generation of Korean traditional musicians reviving tradition in our twenty-first century. Regarding the phenomenon of new creativity within Korea, Lee So-Young argues that its goal is 'to escape from the old and conservative image of Korean traditional music' (2003a, 212). Kim Jin Ah asserts that it is a response to the requirement of a new cultural concept by Koreans living through a century of blurred cultural boundaries (2011, 219). For various reasons, then, concerts that include *changjak gugak* have grown rapidly in popularity in the 2000s (Howard 2011, 200). Through the K-Music Festival, the KCCUK has challenged stereotypes about Korean music and showcased a diverse range of contemporary music. While large-scale ambitious festivals in grand locations like Trafalgar Square are limited in their ability to showcase Korean culture within a single day, the strength of the K-Music Festival is that it can feature a broad variety of music throughout the year.

However, I feel that the KCCUK needs to develop alternative approaches to sustain interest and a desire to learn about Korean culture in greater depth. In this respect, cultural education programmes are useful tools. There are already several places to study Korean language in London other than the KCCUK, although there is nowhere one can specifically be directly in contact with Korean culture as authentically as being in Korea. Although SOAS Korean music and dance societies offer some opportunities in this area, these are rather intermittent and mainly benefit the students of SOAS. Since it is the only official institution that represents Korean culture in the UK, and the first point of contact for many with an interest in Korean culture, the KCCUK needs to offer facilities that enable and encourage a continuous pursuit of in-depth knowledge and curiosity about Korean culture over a long period. The centre already has a variety of equipment

to support cultural experiences, so it should make the best possible use of this. There may be logistical difficulties in running classes due to spatial constraints, but providing lecture-type classes may be an option. At the concerts of Korean Sounds and the K-Music Festival, many audience members enquire as to the instruments and the music; how can their interest be developed? One audience member even asked me about the proper pronunciation of the *gayageum*, as it was a new and foreign word to them.<sup>106</sup> Most audience members I have spoken with comment that the concert was their first encounter with Korean music, yet there is a lack of places where they can acquire more knowledge. Although the K-pop Academy does provide some education about overall Korean culture, this is not available to the general public, and the Academy has only a limited capacity for admitting students. Hence, it is clear that educational programmes at the centre should be provided, serving as a positive step to maintaining ongoing interest.

## **2. The Korean community**

Ethnic cultural festivals are thought to attract people from mainstream society by affording them the opportunities to experience a new culture. As a result, the mainstream eventually gains a better understanding and a more tolerant attitude toward their immigrant neighbours (Auerbach 1991, 225). Koreans in London have endeavoured to announce and make known their presence in various ways; holding festivals in the local area of New Malden (and Kingston) has been one of their strategies. These efforts aim at raising awareness of Korean culture among the local community and help New Malden become known as London's Koreatown, much as Los Angeles is in the US.

Korean cultural festivals and events have a reasonably long history, as explored in Chapter 3. As an extension, here I explore community events held between 2015 and 2017, of which four festivals are highlighted: the 2015 New Malden Arts Festival, Kingston Welcomes Korea in 2015, Korean Cultural Evening in 2016, and the 2016 and 2017 Kingston Korean Festival. In addition to these four, I also discuss other events I observed involving music. I focus on how music

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<sup>106</sup> 'At the Korean Sounds – East Meets West', *Virtuoso*, 21 June 2017.



is utilised in different ways depending on the respective aims, organisers, and contexts of each event and how music is employed effectively.

## 2.1. New Malden Arts Festival

The 8th New Malden Arts Festival (NMAF) was held from 7 to 20 September 2015 by the charity Theatre for All (T4A) with the theme 'Our Friends, Our Stories'. This festival has been organised annually since 2007, with the exception of 2013 when T4A co-organised the Korean Festival with the Korean Residents Society. Although the director of T4A is Korean, the festival has not only showcased Korean culture, but is also about the diverse culture of New Malden. During its two-weeks, art works by local artists were displayed in several local shops, cafes, and restaurants, and 20 programmes were arranged covering various artistic fields including creative writing, poetry, painting.



The image shows a poster for the 8th New Malden Arts Festival (NMAF) 2015. The poster has a yellow background with a white central area containing the festival's title and theme. To the right of the poster is a detailed program list.

**8th Arts Festival NM 2015**  
**"Our Friends, Our Stories"**  
 7th - 20th September 2015

Co organised by  
 Theatre For All, New Malden Creative, Kingston Environment Centre

Supported by  
 The Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames, CLS Holdings

New Malden has many artists, community arts groups and individual performers who live and work here. This September, Theatre for All, New Malden Creative and Kingston Environment intend enliven the town with two weeks of arts events for the whole community, bringing together local talent to create and display joyful, interesting and inspiring works of art.

**PROGRAM**

7th ~ 20th Arts Trail

8th - Radio Kimchi UK 7pm-8pm, Radio Bang! 8pm - 9pm

9th - Nature Writing Workshop with Travel Writer Jini Reddy

10th - Korean Tea Ceremony with Ger Linde  
 - New Malden Voices with Jane Wilkinson

11th - Open Mic with Ben Henderson

12th - Children's Arts Activities  
 - Family Poetry Workshop with Lucy Furlong  
 - Singing Flash Mob  
 - Paint the High St Red, Live Sketching Event  
 - Artists Open House Day 1  
 - Experimental Art Workshop Exploring the Notion of Nothingness  
 - Street Theatre: Sleeping Beauty by St James Players

13th - Silk Scarf Painting With Ayshea  
 - Artists Open House: Day 2  
 - Free Your Creativity with Mindfulness

17th - North Korean Friends and Their Stories

18th - Battle of The Bands - For Band Members Aged Between 10-17yrs old

19th - Summer Breeze - International Music Stage  
 - Love Art Workshop - Stencil Tote Bags and Jewellery Making  
 - Doll Making - Dreamsandheart.com

**Figure 4.4. Programme of the New Malden Arts Festival in 2015 (author's collection).**

Of all the programmes, there were three musical events: Singing Flash Mob, Battle of The Bands, and Summer Breeze. The word 'flash mob' was introduced recently into the Oxford English Dictionary to define 'a large public gathering at which people perform an unusual or seemingly random act and then disperse, typically organised by means of the Internet or social media'. Flash mobs have become a powerful tool which can effectively shape and reinvent our experience of public

space (Molnar 2014, 50) and enhance connectedness and positive emotion in connection to the public (Grant, Bal, and Parent 2012, 244). Thus, T4A arranged one such flash mob with singing on New Malden High Street on Saturday, 12 September 2015 in order to provide entertainment for the local community as well as to promote the festival itself.



**Figure 4.5. Battle of the Bands – one of the NMAF programmes in 2015 (photo by the author).**

The Battle of the Bands was a competition held on 18 September 2015 at Malden Wanderers Cricket Club. The aim was to give local teenagers, aged between 10 and 17 years, the chance to perform as a group in public. Upon arrival at the venue, a member of staff told me that a total of 120 tickets had been sold in spite of this being a paid event, and the hall was already full, most likely with parents or friends of performers. Since the venue is not a proper music hall, the stage was quite small, and struggled to accommodate even a single group. Most performers seemed to be nervous as they were young and had very limited if any previous experience of performing in public. Seven teams participated, playing cover songs of bands in fashion at the time. All in attendance seemed to enjoy the performances in the casual setting without chairs.

Summer Breeze was held on 18 September outside the Kingston Environment Centre near the Fountain roundabout. Fortunately, the weather was perfect for the outdoor concert and chairs and tents were prepared for the audience. Many of the audience were casual passers-by rather than those specifically there to watch the event. The organiser said this outdoor concert had been running for two years and aimed to give opportunities to local musicians who wanted to perform in public, as well as allowing the local community to enjoy performances for free. On the International Music Stage, every performer hailed from a different background and presented a diverse range of performances.



**Figure 4.6. Summer Breeze – one of the NMAF programmes in 2015 (photo by the author).**

The event was held intermittently from 12pm to 6pm. It featured 11 performers whose sets each lasted between 15 to 20 minutes. Song Dayena, a Korean teenager who participated, had been learning the *gayageum* for six years. She thought it would be a good opportunity for her to experience performing in public as well as joining a community activity. She played three pieces, 'Sanjo/Scattered melodies' (from the traditional folk-art genre) and 'Chimhyangmoo/Aloeswood dance' (a solo piece by Hwang Byung-ki (1936-2018)) on the 12-stringed *gayageum*, and 'Ulsan agassi/Lady from Ulsan' (a rearranged folksong) on the 25-stringed *gayageum*. However, due to the location, her performances were easily disturbed by noisy traffic on the road nearby, as well as from general noise from

the public who were not interested in the event but who passed between the stage and the audience without noticing what was going on.

Performers	Genres
Gordon Montague	New age blues
Dayena Song	Gayageum (traditional Korean music)
The Kandyan Dancing Academy	Sri Lankan dance
J.M.Ajith Jayasundara	Sri Lankan traditional classical music
The Nepali Mela Festival	Nepalese music and dance
Yuri Cho	Korean pop music
Jules Korea	Hip-hop
Peter Graham	Western pop music
ZAiN Worldwide	Western pop music
Miyuki	Jazz, soul and blues
Andrew McKay Jazz Quartet	Jazz

**Table 4.6. Performance list of Summer Breeze 2015.**

Throughout the festival, the participation by Koreans was lower than my expectation, particularly considering their high population in New Malden. At Summer Breeze, there appeared to be only a few Koreans, and they did not even know what the event was. When it came to the band competition, most band members seemed to be friends or neighbours of audience members. I had a conversation with the director regarding this and discovered three significant points. First of all, she found it hard to find Korean students who played in bands. Most Korean students focused on learning Western classical music rather than pop, either due to parental pressure or because of their own free will. Second, even if they knew how to play band instruments, Koreans were more likely to play religious music such as contemporary Christian music rather than pop. This was due to the fact that many young Koreans learn and practice instruments in Korean protestant churches. The third issue she identified was that many Koreans tended to associate only with Koreans, rather than with the broader local community. She found it hard to gather Koreans from the community, specifically those from older generations who struggled with the language barrier and cultural differences. Since many Koreans aged over 40 living in the UK were educated in Korea, they remain more comfortable with Korean culture and prefer to speak Korean, regardless of how long they have been living in the UK. This issue is not limited to Koreans in the UK, but also applies to Korean immigrants

in other countries (e.g. Y.R. Shim and Schwartz 2007; Bernstein et al. 2011; H.-J. Park and Kim 2013), much as it does to other immigrant communities (e.g. Treas and Mazumdar 2002; Kurman and Ronen-Ellon 2004; Ip, Lui, and Chui 2007; G. Kim et al. 2011). Most of my research has found language to be the main obstacle stopping immigrants from integrating with local residents or adapting to the new culture. Although Koreans are willing to socialise with their neighbours, it is not easy to break down the language barrier, which requires considerable time and effort.

## 2.2. Kingston Welcomes Korea

The Kingston Welcomes Korea event was held in Kingston Borough over ten days from 30 July to 8 August 2015. This was expected to be a huge festival, supported by 17 bodies including the South Korean Embassy, Kingston Council, and UK Trade and Investment. John Elsom, the executive director, announced that he hoped Kingston *would* celebrate and welcome Korea, and that the festival would become a place for enjoyment and unification among community members.<sup>107</sup> The festival was significant in the way that it was organised not by Koreans, but by British promoters, with Kingston Council as a sponsor for the first time. Besides John Elsom, several local British people took charge of artistic direction, Philip Par for theatre, David Sutton-Anderson and Avril Anderson for music, and Simona Nastac for visual arts. Keith Howard, an ethnomusicologist specialising on Korean music, also participated as one of the principal advisers and organising the performance of SANI, a traditional Korean music ensemble, as well as providing drum accompaniment for a *pansori* performance. During the initial stages of preparation, there was a Korean co-executive director, Kwon Suk-Ha, although he resigned due to creative differences.<sup>108</sup> As a result, only one Korean artistic director remained, Jeon Hyejung, although her role was limited to organising performance programmes at the Rose Theatre.

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<sup>107</sup> John Elsom's interview with The Euro Journal, a local Korean-language newspaper, published on 22 July 2015.

<sup>108</sup> KRSUK, "Kingston Welcomes Korea *haengsa juchoecheuk hanin hoegwan bangmun* (The organiser of Kingston Welcomes Korea visited the Korean Centre)", 31 May 2015, [http://www.krsuk.info/board\\_hzFr05/898](http://www.krsuk.info/board_hzFr05/898), accessed 22 October 2020.





**Figure 4.7. Poster (left) and concert programme (right) of the Kingston Welcomes Korea in 2015 (author's collection).**

Date	Title	Performer
1.10pm 1 <sup>st</sup> August	Lunchtime Choral Recital	1. Sally Mays, piano 2. Simon Desorgher, flute 3. The Choir of the Korean Catholic Church of London
7.30pm 1 <sup>st</sup> August	Anglo-Korean Crossover Concert	1. Sound Positive, instrumental ensemble 2. Jong Hyurk Park, <i>pansori</i> 3. Keith Howard, <i>buk</i> 4. The Choir of the Korean Catholic Church of London
1.10pm 3 <sup>rd</sup> August	Lunchtime Piano Recital	Yoon Seok Shin, piano
7.30pm 4 <sup>th</sup> August	Rising Stars of Korea	1. Grace Yeo, piano 2. Marisol Lee, violin
7.30pm 5 <sup>th</sup> August	Anglo-Korean Dance and Music Collaboration	1. Philip Parr, Director 2. Jason Piper, Choreographer 3. Won Il, Composer
7.30pm 6 <sup>th</sup> August	Anglo-Korean Crossover Concert	1. Hyelim Kim, <i>daegeum</i> 2. Dennis Lee, <i>jangu</i> 3. Melanie Henry, saxophones and clarinet 4. Sally Mays, piano
7.30pm 8 <sup>th</sup> August	Independence Day Concert	SANI, traditional Korean music ensemble

**Table 4.2. Music-related programmes at the Kingston Welcomes Korea.**

Diverse programmes were planned as well as a trade fair, Korean food market, exhibition, gardening, and a Green Debate. The performance programmes were held at two venues, with six music concerts at All Saints Church, and six performances including dance and plays at the Rose Theatre. I went to all six music concerts, which were organised by the music director, and by the husband and wife team of David Sutton-Anderson and Avril Anderson, and to one performance; an Anglo-Korean dance and music collaboration called *The Stem, the Bud, the Bloom, the Seed*, in which music formed a great deal of all the programmes held in the Rose Theatre.

The lunchtime choral recital comprised seven items. The first two were Western choral music, the next three were Western classical pieces played on a piano and flute, and the last two were performed by a choir, singing 'Alleluja' and *Arirang*. There were many in attendance, mostly family or friends of the choir's members. The performance was well-received, yet there was much curiosity as to how the pianist, flautist, and choir performed alongside one another in a programme without any connection between repertoires. The following Anglo-Korean crossover concert on the same evening seemed better arranged. Although it was an extended version of the lunchtime concert, involving the same performers plus a few additional members, the choir and ensemble at least performed one piece together. David Sutton-Anderson composed a piece called 'Korean Garden' for the choir and ensemble, with lyrics by John Elsom, the executive director, inspired by the Korean garden at All Saints Church, Kingston. However, the overall programme seemed to be more akin to a personal recital for the two Andersons – husband and wife as well as the artistic directors of the festival – as half of the programme was either composed or arranged by them.

The next two concerts, a lunchtime piano recital and Rising Stars of Korea, were performed by three young Korean artists playing Western classical music. Shin Yoon Seok, the pianist for the lunchtime recital, had received an artistic diploma and Master of Music at the Royal College of Music, and had won many competitions including the Manchester International Concerto competition. He has been highly active, performing at various venues in the UK such as St. John's Smith Square, Steinway Hall, and Yamaha Chappell Concert Hall. Rising Stars of Korea was presented by the duo Grace Yeo, a pianist, and Marisol Lee, a violinist.

Grace graduated from Guildhall School of Music and Drama on a scholarship, and has performed at several renowned halls in London including the Wigmore Hall, Royal Festival Hall, and the Purcell Room. Marisol received her MA from the Royal Academy of Music and was awarded the Stennebruggen Prize by the Carl Flesch Academy in Germany. She, too, is actively performing worldwide, in festivals such as the International Chamber Festival and Music Alp Festival. There seemed to be one thing common between the two concerts: both featured one piece of music composed by a Korean, alongside well-known classical Western pieces. After the concerts, I asked them about the programming and they answered it was not their intention to do this, but the director had asked them to play at least one piece by a Korean, considering the overall festival theme. They added that this often happens at events in which artists need to reflect their national identity, yet they are not expected to play pieces by Koreans at most performances. Since the organisers of festivals for ethnic groups want to make the events special, and the audience at these festivals expects something different from usual Western music concerts, it is common that pieces written by composers of the same ethnicity as the performers will be performed, regardless of the characteristics of a piece or the intentions of its composer. Hence, the piece Shin Yoon Seok played, written by Chin Unsuk (b.1961), a Korean composer who lives in Germany, was closer to avant-garde Western music, rather than having an identifiable Korean identity.

The high level of musicianship displayed was unfortunately not matched by the turnout. Although Koreans are not well-known as Western classical musicians, the attendance was disproportionately low considering how accomplished they were. Only two attended the Rising Stars of Korea, and only a few more were at the lunchtime recital. Even they were students who were learning from the pianist, accompanied by their parents. Only the Anglo-Korean Dance and Music Collaboration included collaborative works between Korean and British performers. Held at the Rose Theatre under the title *The Stem, The Bud, The Bloom, The Seed*, which was one of the festivals' themes, it used the emblem of a flower as a metaphor for the situation faced by Korean immigrants to the UK. The representation was about the beginning of Korean immigration, growth, the blooming of the community, and the next generation. The theme was meaningful and appropriate, and the harmony between three well-known artists



with performers was also impressive. Arguably, there was limited time available for practice; the Korean composer, Won Il (b.1967), arrived in the UK from Korea only a few days before the performance. It seemed to be the pinnacle of the whole festival. However, once again the thorny issue of low attendance has to be considered. I took the opportunity to talk to the composer after the performance, and he said with frustration that he had never performed in front of such a small audience.



**Figure 4.8. Kingston Welcomes Korea Concerts in 2015 (photo by the author).**

The second Anglo-Korean crossover concert was a duet by a pianist and saxophonist in the first half, and the *daegeum* Korean horizontal bamboo flute in the second half. The duo played six contemporary classical pieces – two of which were again composed by Avril and David Anderson. The duo was also members of Sound Positive, an instrumental ensemble formed by the Andersons in 1987. The *daegeum* player gave four pieces, demonstrating different characteristics of traditional music: *Cheongseonggok* (one of the most favoured pieces of literati music), *sanjo* (traditional folk-art music), and Korean folksongs. This was the only programme where they performed together, playing *Cheong* written by Kim Dae Sung (b.1967). Apart from this, the performances were totally separated from

one another. As for the audience, the numbers were again low and most were related to the performers.

The last event was the Independence Day Concert performed by the ensemble SANI, composed of seven renowned traditional Korean musicians. They played six traditional pieces, making this one of the more meaningful sets since it is rare to get the opportunity to listen to live pieces played by experienced traditional musicians outside of Korea. However, it seemed that there should have been a more appropriate title for the concert. My assumption is that the director assigned this title as it was the last concert in the festival and was held in August, Korean Independence Day being on 15 August. However, the performance hardly related to the title; the pieces had nothing to do with Independence Day. There was a slightly larger audience for this event than the others, as it was the only concert full of traditional Korean music, and such an event is rare in Kingston. One attendee who came with their children suggested that 'It was such a good opportunity to show my children real traditional Korean music in Kingston. I know there are some in central London, but it is hard to take them that far. I hope there will be more chances like this.'<sup>109</sup>

I distributed a questionnaire to the audience at all the concerts I attended to gather the impressions of audiences. I asked six questions about the sources of information, satisfaction, prior experiences, impact on the Korean community, expectations, intentions to return to the festival, as well as collecting demographic variables relating to age, gender, residence period in the UK and nationality. The total number of responses I gathered was 36. According to my analysis of the results, the biggest reason for coming to concerts was cultural entertainment. As for the programming, 32 attendees were either highly or very highly satisfied with the event that they attended and 29 had a high or very high intention to return if such an event was held again. This shows that the programmes themselves were good enough to satisfy the audiences who attended. I gained little clarity on why audience numbers were so low. According to my data, 23 came to a concert due to personal connections to the performer, and this constituted the most common reason for attending. This was most

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<sup>109</sup> Personal communication with audience members on 8 August 2015.

striking considering the largest audiences were at the concerts performed by the Korean Catholic Church of London on 1 August. Church members who did not sing in the choir came along to cheer those who did. This was repeated at other concerts. Although both the lunchtime piano recital and Rising Star Concert were performed by young Korean musicians, more attended the recital. The reason was that the pianist had grown up and lived in Kingston, and thus had many connections within the Korean community, from church links to his students. Harkness points out that church relations are a reliable way to generate ticket sales in Korea (2014, 156-57), and parallels exist with the Korean community in London. On the other hand, performers for the Rising Star Concert resided in central London and had no strong local connection. This is evidence to show that Koreans tend to go to events to support performers who are close to them. The organisers should have understood the characteristics of the Korean community and utilised connections for better promotion of its events.

Only six percent of the audience came to concerts as a result of advertising; this suggests that there was a fundamental problem with how events were advertised. There were, in fact, several advertisements placed in local Korean-language newspapers, on Korean-related websites such as London Korean Links and Korean Class Massive, on local institute websites such as Kingston Council, Kingston College, and in local non-Korean-language newspapers including the Surrey Comet and Sutton & Croydon Guardian. There was no one person in charge of marketing the festival, and I assume that the major problem was the effective utilisation of social media, undoubtedly the most influential medium today for advertising, with an ability to cover broader areas than any other method. The number of social media users increases every year<sup>110</sup> and the younger generation spends a large amount of time online.<sup>111</sup> Moreover, social media advertising costs less than traditional advertising mediums, as it relies on

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<sup>110</sup> PEW Research Center, "Social Media Fact Sheet", 12 June 2019, <https://www.pewresearch.org/internet/fact-sheet/social-media>, accessed 22 October 2020.

<sup>111</sup> Natalie Hanman, "Growing up with the wired generation", 10 November 2005, <http://www.theguardian.com/technology/2005/nov/10/newmedia.media>, accessed 17 February 2018.

user networks for distribution. It was, though, difficult to find any advertisement for the festival on social media sites. Having considered that one third of respondents to the questionnaire were in their 20s, this lack of online presence was unfortunate.

There was also a significant issue in relation to the cost of attending events. There were 16 performances in total, six music concerts at All Saint Church and five shows each performed twice at the Rose Theatre. The ticket price was £15 or £10 for concessions, and £25 for evening gala invitations, which included a drink and the opportunity to meet artists. The prices were reasonable considering the price range of other performances at the Rose Theatre (typically £10 to £35), but Koreans are not used to paying to attend their own festivals or for concerts performed by Koreans. Apart from this case, most expect free or complimentary tickets, as this is common in Korea (Howard 2016b, 462). Moreover, if various events happened in a single day, it would not be easy for one person to pay for, or even go to, all events across the total 10 days of the festival. Most likely, one person would attend only one or two performances. My data suggests that if there had been one big performance with a mix of items instead of several smaller concerts, audiences would have been larger. Consequentially, the Kingston Welcomes Korea festival was unsuccessful due to its low participation rates, lack of understanding of the Korean community, and ineffective promotion, even though it had considerable backing from several major organisations.

### **2.3. Kingston Korean Festival in 2016 and 2017**

Even though the festival in 2015 was not successful, Kingston Council wanted to organise a festival again in 2016, hoping to make it one of the distinct offerings of Kingston. They searched for someone who knew the Korean community well and had enough previous experience of organising events, and reached out to Jang Jung-eun (Justina Jang), who had previously organised large-scale Korean festivals in central London. She told me that she had been inactive in cultural promotion for the previous five years since the closure of the KCPA, when she received the council's proposal.<sup>112</sup> However, she thought it would be a good

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<sup>112</sup> Interview conducted on 12 October 2016 in New Malden.

opportunity to restart her career, and wanted to organise a sustainable festival in the local area rather than merely one-off events. She suggested the council should hold a Korean festival in autumn every year, to which they agreed.

She first organised and registered a charity, the Korean British Cultural Exchange (KBCE, registration no.1176236),<sup>113</sup> in order to run the festival properly, and gathered a team to work with her, comprising those who previously worked with her as well as candidates who showed an interest in cultural activities. They set the harvest celebration as the theme for the first festival and agreed to fill the programme with activities relating to the theme. They picked the ancient market place in Kingston as the venue, thinking it would be appropriate for recreating a Korean style outdoor festival atmosphere at a low cost. The date was set by the council as Saturday, 17 September 2016, given the availability of the designated space, and with the date being relatively close to the Korean *Chuseok* holiday.



**Figure 4.9. Programme of the Kingston Korean Festival 2016 (author's collection).**

The festival began at noon and continued until 4pm. It had Korean food and cooking demonstrations, dessert making, folk games, Taekwondo

<sup>113</sup> <http://www.kbce.org.uk/home/home.html>, accessed 18 February 2018.

demonstrations, traditional Korean music, a K-pop dance competition, and a 'Victorian tea time'. Several Korean food stalls were set up on one side for the whole festival where people could buy and enjoy meals and snacks, and on the other side Korean souvenirs, first aid, and a survey booth were placed. Between the lined stalls, an outdoor stage was planned for activities including folk games, K-pop dance, and traditional Korean music. There was only one musical performance, as the KBCE did not have a sufficient budget to rent the appropriate sound equipment. As a result, they invited the Youn Hwa Sa Samulnori Team, a percussion quartet of members of the Korean Buddhist temple Youn Hwa Sa in Kingston, to perform *gillori*, traditional Korean parade with percussion and dance. One reason for this was that the sound of the percussion instruments is very loud and therefore appropriate in an open-air environment without microphones.

I conducted a questionnaire in cooperation with the KBCE, asking about information, expectations, satisfaction for individual programmes and the event as a whole, possible intentions to revisit, and demographic variables.<sup>114</sup> 171 responded. According to my analysis, most came to enjoy the Korean cultural experience and entertainment, with 152 responding that the whole experience was either very good or good. As for individual programmes, the food and cooking demonstration, Taekwondo, and traditional Korean music performance were ranked in terms of satisfaction highest to lowest. 159 responded that they would more than likely revisit the festival should it be held again the following year and 151 hoped more music and dance could be included the next year. The biggest difference from the Kingston Welcomes Korea festival the year before was the number of participants. One can guess that this was due to the availability of free entry, the outdoor setting and good weather, and effective advertisement. Since the KBCE received less than a quarter of the budget in comparison to that of Kingston Welcomes Korea, they needed to plan to achieve maximum efficiency at minimum cost. They had no choice but to hold the festival on a single day rather than across a few days, and by putting several cultural aspects together in the open air. As for promotion, a poster, word-of-mouth recommendations, and online discussions proved to be the top three means of advertising. There was

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<sup>114</sup> The questionnaire can be found in Appendix.



active promotion on Facebook several weeks prior to the festival date. Social media was used not only for promotion, but also to recruit volunteers to assist in running the event. The effective use of this medium allowed KBCE to recruit enough volunteers, which was crucial for its success.

The KBCE continued with a similar festival format the following year, 2017. On the back of the success of the 2016 event, the KBCE received more support, which enabled them to organise a special exhibition, *Dol* (which means the first birthday and which is traditionally the most important birthday celebration), lasting from 31 August to 3 October at the Kingston Museum. They also increased the participation programmes, reflecting the feedback received the previous year. In preparation, KBCE utilised social media much more actively to gather volunteers, and the roles of volunteers were not merely limited to helping run the festival on the day but included suggesting ideas for the programme from its early planning stage. This encouraged better teamwork, and gave each team member the motivation to work hard. As a member of the Facebook group, I can report that it was easy to observe active suggestions and discussions in posts.

The festival was held on Saturday 16 September 2017, between 12pm and 4pm, at the same venue as in 2016. Food stalls and several booths were set up on both sides of the marketplace, and a small stage for performances was installed. There were spaces in the middle which were reserved for other activities. The festival began with a *gillori* performance, which followed the same procedure as the previous year although this time parade members were the volunteers, wearing traditional Korean masks they had made themselves, with pop music playing in the background. They marched and danced all the way around the market place for a few minutes, finally entering the festival location, leading those who had followed them along the route. Several participation programmes were offered. In line with the exhibition *Dol*, the KBCE prepared *hanbok* (traditional Korean costume) for children to try on, and *doljabi* (a traditional Korean ceremony for a baby's first birthday in which the child chooses one of a set of objects from the ceremonial table) for families with young children to participate in. There was a Korean Buddhist-style lantern-making, *jegichagi* (a folk game),

various cultural activities by Artrash, and bike security workshops run by Dr. Bike. All events were free and everyone was able to join.



**Figure 4.10. Programme of the Kingston Korean Festival 2017 (author's collection).**

Various performances were presented. The Arirang Gayageum Ensemble, comprised of Korean community members, played the *gayageum* zither and sang three songs, the British folksong 'Greensleeves', and two Korean folk songs, 'Doraji/Bell flower' and 'Arirang'. The Mystic Nights Entertainments team danced to K-pop. The Korean-based singer Kim Geonmin, and the UK-based singer Grace Kim sang three of their own songs each. The leader of a *samulnori* team, The Bridge, who had participated in the festival the previous year, performed with three other performers to play the most famous *samulnori* piece, *Yeongnam nong-ak*, based on rhythmic patterns from the southeastern Gyeongsang province in the finale. On the community stage, Arirang Yesuldan presented two different performances, one playing *janggu* (the double-headed hourglass-shaped drum) and the other a North Korean dance which began with *buchaechum* (fan dance). There was also a costume changing performance. The Arirang Yesuldan was particularly meaningful as it offered a rare opportunity for the wider community to observe North Korean culture in performances. Seven K-pop cover dance



teams also participated in the middle of the festival, which attracted a younger generation, and the audience eagerly supported them.



**Figure 4.11. Kingston Korean Festival 2017 (photo by the author).**

I conducted a questionnaire in cooperation with the KBCE again, gathering a total of 211 responses.<sup>115</sup> Most of the questions I asked were similar to those of the previous year, including festival information, expectations, satisfaction for both programmes and as a whole, intentions to revisit the festival, and so on, but I asked two additional questions. One was whether audiences specifically came to Kingston for the sole purpose of attending the festival; the second asked whether they had been at the festival the previous year. According to my results, the primary reason for the visit remained cultural entertainment. Over half of the audience members interviewed responded that they had come across the festival through online promotion and by word-of-mouth. 189 deemed the whole event either very good or good, with the K-pop programmes the most popular, followed by the Korean martial arts demonstration, traditional music, and the community stage. 67 people responded that they hoped in future that more music and dance programmes would be included, and 176 responded that they were either very likely or likely to attend the festival if it was held the next year. There were a high number of very positive comments to the last part of the questionnaire, such as

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<sup>115</sup> The questionnaire can be found in Appendix.

'good', 'amazing', and 'great'. It was obvious that the festival was successful in terms of feedback and given the high number of people. It drew great crowds by taking advantage of the growing popularity of K-pop, and gave the opportunity to experience traditional music as well as North Korean culture. Beyond the number in attendance, it was meaningful in that a range of people from different nationalities and backgrounds participated, which represented a significant difference to the approach adopted in the New Malden Arts Festival and Kingston Welcomes Korea. This shift was possible because of the inclusion of a variety of contributors at the initial organising phase and because their opinions were listened to.

The most significant aspect was that 150 out of 211 respondents came to Kingston specifically for the festival, which matches Kingston Council's purpose of the support. By attracting visitors from outside the town, the council can promote the region and expect to generate local income. Beyond financial benefits, 'a festival enables the residents to create a new vision, a way of looking at the place where they live from another point of view' (Klaic, Bollo, and Bacchella nd, 48). Providing the opportunity to experience Korean culture helps local residents understand and unite with each other, creating a better community. Thus, Kingston Korean Festival is a good example of cooperation between a local authority and a minority community, and provides a win-win event for both.

#### **2.4. Korean Cultural Day**

From 2014, no cultural events were held among the Korean community due to the long-standing dispute in the Korean Residents Association. Many Koreans longed for another event, and the Korean Cultural Day was eventually held on 22 October 2016 by the *Yeonghanhoe* (Association of Korean Communities in the UK), one of the community's associations at that time. The event was free of charge and was held at the New Malden Methodist Church, taking advantage of its accessibility and low-cost rental. Along with a traditional costume exhibition by a designer from Korea, ten performances were showcased by local Koreans: a vocal solo, violin and cello duet, soprano solo, *gayageum byeongchang* (traditional zither performance with singing), *gayageum sanjo* (solo folk-art

music), *seoljanggu* (solo on the hourglass-shaped drum), fan dance, *haegeum* (two-stringed fiddle) with piano and cello, K-pop dance, and *samulnori*. This festival attracted a capacity crowd, and those in attendance who I engaged with stated that they enjoyed all the performances since they were all part of the cultural event which they had not seen in a long time. Euro Journal, a local Korean newspaper, also reported that over 300 audience members attended. Euro Journal also included audience interviews describing the performance as full of content and as a great opportunity to access Korean culture far away from the homeland.<sup>116</sup>

This event was significant in three ways. First, Korean cultural events organised by a Korean association were once again held after three years of absence. Second, it was the first official event in which South and North Koreans participated together as both audience and performers, enjoying music from both Koreas. The solo vocalist Kim Eunjin sang two North Korean popular songs, '*Simjang-e namneum sarang*/A man remembered by the heart' and '*Simsane pineun kkot*/Flowers in the deep mountains'. Hong Junhyun and Kim Sojin, North Korean violinist and cellist respectively, played three South Korean songs, '*Seon-guja*/Pioneer', '*Gohyang-ui bom*/Spring in the hometown', and '*Uri-ui sowoneun tong-il*/Our wish is unification'. The first is a favourite art song, and the second is the most frequently played among overseas Koreans, with lyrics that describe a longing for the hometown. The last is always played at any event where both Koreans sing together, wishing for the unification of the two states. Third, all programmes were performed by local community members regardless of their level of musicianship, and this marked a significant difference in attitude from previous events which invited established performers from Korea to perform the centrepiece of events. Although financial constraints were no doubt a factor, the organisers were keen to allow local Koreans to be the focus. There were, though, some issues in how the overall operation was run. Since there was no

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<sup>116</sup> Kim seho, "*Je 1hoe youngguk hanin munhwaje, daeseonghwangrie gaechoedoe-eo* (The 1st Korean Cultural Day held in great success)", 26 October 2016, [http://eknews.net/xen/?\\_filter=search&mid=journal\\_special&search\\_keyword=%ED%95%9C%EC%9D%B8+%EB%AC%B8%ED%99%94%EC%A0%9C&search\\_target=title&document\\_srl=488636](http://eknews.net/xen/?_filter=search&mid=journal_special&search_keyword=%ED%95%9C%EC%9D%B8+%EB%AC%B8%ED%99%94%EC%A0%9C&search_target=title&document_srl=488636), accessed 22 April 2021.

professional performance director in charge, the programmes were often delayed and did not progress smoothly. Even though it was planned by two committee members, neither of them were professional directors and could not effectively control the proceedings. Most performers did not have time to rehearse or do a sound check, and this caused acoustic problems. This occurred several times and each time led to a delay. In addition, one member of staff seemed to continuously pass in front of the stage, interfering with the ability of the audience to fully concentrate on what was being performed. It would have been better to employ a professional director who could run the event without causing such gratuitous problems. Unfortunately, the event did not continue in 2017 due to the merger of the *Yeonghanhoe* with the Korean Residents Association.



**Figure 4.12. Korean Cultural Day 2016 (author's collection).**

## 2.5. Other community festivals

The Korean Food Festival was held almost every year from 2003 onwards, spearheaded by the Korean Restaurants and Supermarkets Association (KORSA) as part of New Malden Fortnight, a local community festival held over two weeks every year. According to local Korean-language newspaper articles, it was first held in the back yard of the Fountain Pub, and was attended by over a thousand

of people each year.<sup>117</sup> When I visited on 11 July 2015, there were several food stalls on one side and a small stage-like space with many tables and chairs on the other. The running order was written on a notice board in Korean and the programmes looked similar to those of previous festivals. The first half contained the Pledge of Allegiance and congratulatory addresses from several people (which are a common ritual procedure for Korean events). Three performances followed the opening ceremony. Performance began at noon with KAYA, a husband-and-wife duo of *gayageum* zither and guitar, and four pieces were played: *gayageum sanjo*, 'Let it be' by the Beatles and two of their own compositions. This duo has participated in the festival almost every year, given their status as local artists, and they are well-known to many in the community. After them, a short Korean costume show followed. Thereafter, there were two performances of *pansori* (epic storytelling through song) and a duo of a singer and a *gayageum* player. These young artists came from Korea, not specifically for this festival but on personal short trips to Europe, and happened to be in London during the festival period. Thus, the organisers asked them to perform to fill part of the programme. This proved beneficial in many ways, since the organisers saved on travel costs, and the young artists themselves were able to gain experience of performing overseas. The overall atmosphere was casual, and the audience could move around and mingle.

After the performances, cooking demonstrations followed, continuing until a singing contest. A *karaoke* machine was installed for the contest and participants were recruited on the spot. Many sang Korean pop songs or *trot* songs, while other local people sang Western pop songs. Children participated by singing children's songs or British pop songs. It was obvious that the singing contest was the highlight of the festival, and that music formed an essential role in creating a vivid and bright atmosphere in general. A singing contest is one of

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<sup>117</sup> Kim seho, "*Yeongguk, han-guk eumsik munhwa chukje daeseonghwang* (Success of Korean Food Festival in Britain)," 28 August 2006, [http://www.eknews.net/xe/journal\\_special/89052](http://www.eknews.net/xe/journal_special/89052), and Noh Young-ae, "*Yeongguk Korean Food Festival choedae inpa mollyeo daeseonghwang* (Huge success of Korean Food Festival in Britain with a large number of people)", 19 July 2011, [http://www.eknews.net/xe/?mid=journal\\_special&document\\_srl=145723&listStyle=viewer](http://www.eknews.net/xe/?mid=journal_special&document_srl=145723&listStyle=viewer), accessed 22 October 2020.



the most popular activities and highlights of any Korean gathering, including annual year-end parties. As explained in Chapter 3, the aim of such a party is to look back upon the year and close it with positive and hopeful thoughts for the New Year. People enjoy food and drink while others sing in a casual setting. Although it was technically a contest, the event was rather like a talent show that transitioned until everyone sang and danced together, and most of those who participated received some sort of prize. This can be understood as a participatory performance in Turino's terms, since there is no distinction between artist and audience, and it involves the maximum number of people (Turino 2008, 26-51). Such activities are beneficial to members in Korean diaspora in London, since participatory performances are a strong force for social bonding (ibid., 29).



**Figure 4.13. Korean Food Festival 2015 (photo by the author).**

In addition, the National Unification Advisory Council in the UK organises more formal events a few times each year, with special lectures and music concerts. The subjects change every time, but the main theme is constantly fixed as being Korean reunification. I attended three of these events in 2016 and 2017: 'Lectures on the reconciliation of overseas Koreans in the UK and wish for unification' in November 2016, 'Unification event with the 2nd generation of North Koreans' in May 2017, and 'Korean UK Annual Dinner' in November 2017, all of which

included traditional music performances. Notably at the annual dinner, over half the guests were British people who held important or significant posts in society, which meant that the performers were asked to play some pieces which these people could feel familiarity with, as well as the more usual repertoire of traditional Korean pieces. Hence, well-known songs such as 'Let it be' by the Beatles and 'Amazing Grace' were played alongside the *gayageum* zither and the *daegeum* flute. In addition, traditional repertoires including the *buchaechum* fan dance and *seoljanggu* drum solo were given. North Korean dance was also presented by Arirang Yesuldan troupe. Where Korean culture is presented in a formal setting, traditional performances feature more than any other genres, as these are able to provide unique impressions of Korean culture both visually and sonically. Nonetheless, some organisers seem to lack respect for the artists, allowing people to walk in front of the stage or serving food in the middle of the performance. According to my conversation with performers, they are reluctant to perform at events organised by specific people for these same reasons, and only feel an obligation to do so due to their relationships within the community.

### **3. Chinese and Japanese cultural events**

#### **3.1. Chinese cultural events**

The Chinese diaspora in Britain has the longest history among the three East Asian diasporas. Chinese immigration to the UK began in the late 18th century, as a result of Britain's imperial trade with East Asia. The Chinese population in 2018 forms 0.7 percent of the whole population of England and Wales, their number being estimated at 393,141.<sup>118</sup> Thirty two percent of these live in London, where they make up two percent of the total population.<sup>119</sup> Originally, Chinese settlers

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<sup>118</sup> Population in England and Wales, published by Office for National Statistics in August 2018, <http://www.ethnicity-facts-figures.service.gov.uk/uk-population-by-ethnicity/national-and-regional-populations/population-of-england-and-wales/latest#download-the-data>, accessed 22 March 2021.

<sup>119</sup> 2011 Census Ethnic Group Fact Sheet: Chinese, Census Information Scheme, published by the UK government in 2014, [https://airdrive-secure.s3-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/london/dataset/2011-census-ethnic-group-fact-sheets/2018-11-15T12%3A00%3A00/2011-census-chinese.pdf?X-Amz-Algorithm=AWS4-HMAC-SHA256&X-Amz-Credential=AKIAJJDIMAIIVZJDICKHA%2F20210322%2Feu-west-1%2Fs3%2Faws4\\_request&X-Amz-Date=20210322T175530Z&X-Amz-](https://airdrive-secure.s3-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/london/dataset/2011-census-ethnic-group-fact-sheets/2018-11-15T12%3A00%3A00/2011-census-chinese.pdf?X-Amz-Algorithm=AWS4-HMAC-SHA256&X-Amz-Credential=AKIAJJDIMAIIVZJDICKHA%2F20210322%2Feu-west-1%2Fs3%2Faws4_request&X-Amz-Date=20210322T175530Z&X-Amz-)

started to form a cluster around East London's dockland areas due to their seafaring work, and because of their trade (Parker 1998, 68-69), and the first Chinatown was established in Limehouse in the 1880s as a hub for Chinese sailors (Waller 1985, 9). However, the hub of the community moved to an area wedged between Soho, Covent Garden, Piccadilly Circus and Leicester Square in the 1950s.<sup>120</sup> In 1978, the London Chinatown Chinese Association (LCCA) was founded with the aim of developing and expanding businesses in Chinatown while also representing British Chinese in effective engagements with the British government.<sup>121</sup> As a non-profit organisation, the LCCA has taken a pivotal role, providing a platform for the community, presenting Chinese culture to the world, and building relationships with British partners. They organise an annual New Year festival, which functions as the main event as well as the biggest celebration in the year for all Chinese. Held at lunar New Year, an important traditional holiday that celebrates the coming of the New Year, it runs from lunar New Year's Eve to a lantern festival on the 15th day of the first lunar month. Many Chinese who live overseas celebrate the New Year, wherever they are. Not only the Chinese but many Asian people celebrate the festival, including Vietnamese, Singaporeans, Malaysians and Koreans. Having an annual reunion feast with one's family is a common tradition for all of these people. The Japanese, though, do not celebrate it, since the lunar calendar system was abolished as a result of the Meiji Restoration in the 1860s.

Since the 1980s, the Chinese celebration has taken place in Chinatown. The festival has grown bigger year after year, and since 2002 has taken place on the first Sunday after lunar New Year, covering an area stretching from Trafalgar Square to Leicester Square, and from Charing Cross Road to Shaftesbury Avenue. It is now the biggest Chinese New Year celebration held outside Asia. Normally, it begins with a grand parade at 10am, commencing on Charing Cross Road and

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Expires=300&X-Amz-Signature=80e5d34fb820e789a5b8bcc1c8bff2d41447906f53918be48649b627a4897965&X-Amz-SignedHeaders=host, accessed 22 March 2021.

<sup>120</sup> Conor Sullivan, "London's Chinatown starts catering to modern Asia", 7 September 2017, <http://www.ft.com/content/4b07cbc4-87de-11e7-8bb1-5ba57d47eff7>, accessed 26 October 2020.

<sup>121</sup> <http://www.lccauk.com>, accessed 8 November 2018.



ending on Shaftesbury Avenue, that presents lion and dragon dances and hand-crafted floats. Performances are held in three different locations. The main stage is set up in Trafalgar Square, with traditional and contemporary performance events from 11am for about six hours. Two or three additional stages are set up in Leicester Square, Shaftesbury Avenue and Charing Cross Road which present smaller shows for families as well as martial arts and dances. Lion dances are presented across Chinatown all day until 6pm, and food stalls – which cannot be missed in any festival – are set up all over the area.



**Figure 4.14. Chinese New Year Festival programmes in 2016 and 2017 (author's collection).**

According to news articles, around 700,000 people attend every year.<sup>122</sup> There are two main reasons why it has become so successful. One is the huge support from local authorities and sponsorship by various companies. All roads around

<sup>122</sup> Josie Griffiths and Becky Pemberton, "What time is London's Chinese New Year 2018 parade and how is it celebrated in the rest of the UK?", 18 February 2018, <http://www.thesun.co.uk/news/2594577/chinese-new-year-2018-london-parade-uk>, and Phoebe Southworth for Mailonline, "London hosts the biggest celebration of Chinese New Year outside of China as tens of thousands arrive to mark arrival of Year of the Dog", 18 February 2018, <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-5405933/Chinese-New-Year-2018-celebrated-London-weekend.html>, accessed 26 October 2020.

the area are closed and pedestrianised, supported by Westminster City Council and the Mayor of London. Several British companies, as well as Chinese firms, offer sponsorship, numbering some 14 in 2016, 15 in 2017 and 19 in 2018. The LCCA plays an active part, trying hard to recruit sponsors every year by publishing an information booklet listing all the benefits and describing how to sponsor events. Shaftesbury Plc., a real estate company which owns about 80 percent of the Chinatown area, supports the festival, and in 2017 launched a bilingual information website for Chinatown to attract visitors.<sup>123</sup> It is a win-win strategy, as supporting one of London's biggest festivals brings a vast audience into the area, profiting the company and making activities of the Greater London Authority visible.



**Figure 4.15. Chinese New Year Festival in 2017 (photo by the author).**

Another benefit is community solidarity. On the festival day, Chinese lions dance around Chinatown. The dancers wear costumes and ask for donations, wishing restaurants the best of luck in the New Year, much as would be part of traditional festival dancing. The roads in front of restaurants are full with people wanting to see the dance. Despite potential disturbances, the restaurant owners actively participate by making donations to the lions, further entertaining the audience. All the dancers and many others who participate are volunteers; they may receive contributions towards travel expenses but they do not take part for financial gain,

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<sup>123</sup> <http://www.chinatown.co.uk>, accessed 22 February 2020.

rather merely, wanting to enjoy themselves. Chinese music ensembles also actively participate, performing 30-40 repertoires at various sites. This is beneficial for all, as the musicians showcase their acts on a big stage, and the festival organiser is able to mount a regular programme.



**Figure 4.16. Chinese lion dance in front of a restaurant in Chinatown at Chinese New Year festival in 2017 (photo by the author).**

### 3.2. Japanese cultural events

Japanese migration to the UK began in the late 19th century. The first known relevant Japanese government record shows 264 Japanese in the UK in 1884, working as servants, students, officials, businessmen, craftsmen, and entertainers.<sup>124</sup> The Japanese population numbered over 60,000 in 2018 – this was the largest concentration of Japanese people in Europe at the time.<sup>125</sup> Despite its large size, the Japanese community does not congregate in one particular location in central London, but tends to be dispersed in places such as Hampstead and Finchley in North London, or Ealing and Acton in West London (Sakai 2000, 59).

Japanese ethnic festivals began to be organised in the 1980s. The very first festival in London was held in Battersea Park in 1985, the *Natsu Matsuri* (Summer

<sup>124</sup> *Nippon Teikoku Nenkan* (Vols. 31 to 58, 1912 to 1939), cited in Itoh (2001: 1).

<sup>125</sup> Data published by Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan in 2018, [http://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/toko/page22\\_000043.html](http://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/toko/page22_000043.html), accessed 12 November 2019.



Festival). According to the Japanese music specialist David Hughes,<sup>126</sup> it was initiated by Sue Hudson, a British journalist as well as government officer, and Setsuo Kato, a Japanese photo-journalist. Unlike Chinese or Korean festivals, which were organised by immigrant themselves, the Japanese festivals were able to be held with the help of British people. This is not surprising considering the influence of *japonisme*<sup>127</sup> that was fashionable at that time in Britain (Itoh 2001, 29). The festival was held sporadically and changed its name several times in its history: the Anglo-Japanese Summer Festival in 1987, back to *Natsu Matsuri* in 1991, Anglo-Japanese Festival in 1992, and the Japan Festival in 1995. According to the *Friends of Battersea Park Review*, it was held jointly with the British Red Cross and occupied a huge area of the park, typically attracting over 40,000 visitors (Figure 4.17).<sup>128</sup>



**Figure 4.17. The Anglo-Japanese Festival 1992 (courtesy of Friend of Battersea Park Review).**

The festival was suspended for several years but recommenced in 2009 under the name Japan Matsuri at Spitalfields Market. It moved location to the former County Hall in 2011, and finally settled in Trafalgar Square in 2012 where it could

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<sup>126</sup> Interview, 4 July 2018.

<sup>127</sup> A French term coined in the last nineteenth century to describe the craze for Japanese art and design in the West (<http://www.tate.org.uk/art/art-terms/j/japonisme>, accessed 22 February 2020).

<sup>128</sup> *Friends of Battersea Park Review*, 18/3 (Autumn/Winter 1992), p.3.

be held on a larger scale. It now takes place every year in late September or early October, presenting items of Japanese culture from food to games. It is organised jointly by four institutions: the Japan Association, Japanese Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Japan Society, and Nippon Club, with support from the Embassy of Japan. At the 2016 festival, 18 groups presented music and dance from traditional genres to pop, and more than half its participating performers were based in the UK. The most surprising part of the event to me was the number of companies and institutions that sponsored the festival: 108 in 2016, 100 in 2017 and 110 in 2018 (Figure 4.18). This is unusual in other festivals.

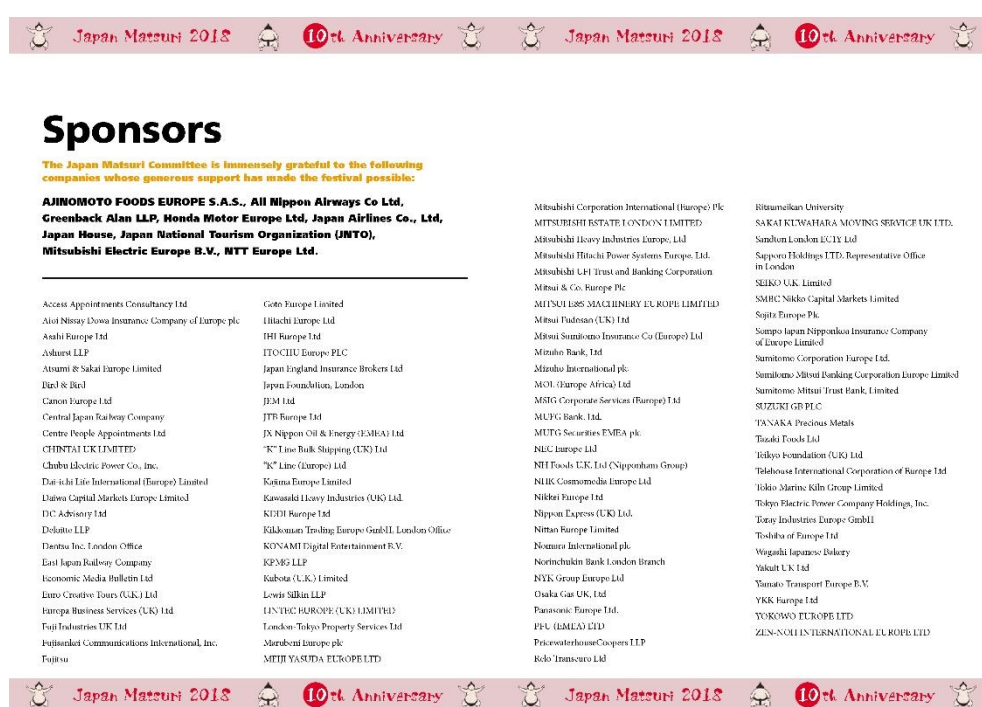


Figure 4.18. Sponsor list of Japan Matsuri 2018 (author's collection).

Besides Japan Matsuri, there are two other major Japanese festivals in London: Okinawa Day and Hyper Japan. Okinawa Day has been organised by London Okinawa Sanshinkai since 2008 and takes place at Spitalfields every June. It presents the uniqueness of Okinawan culture, a culture from the southern Ryukyuan islands that is substantially different from that of other parts of the Japanese archipelago. It was initiated by David Hughes and Robin Thompson, who since 1997 have run the SOAS Okinawan Ensemble. The LOS is now a multinational group, although mostly Japanese, all members of which are

enthusiastic about Okinawan folk and classical music and dance.<sup>129</sup> It holds weekly rehearsals at SOAS and is active in organising performances, workshops and summer schools. In 2018, it celebrated the 10th anniversary of Okinawa Day, presenting classical and folk music, dance, and the island's cuisine.



**Figure 4.19. Okinawa Day 2016 programme (author's collection).**

Japan Matsuri and Okinawa Day are public events, free for all who attend, whereas a third event, Hyper Japan, is commercial, organised by Cross Media Ltd. This began in 1987, founded by a Japanese resident and designed to showcase Japanese culture around the world through publications and events.<sup>130</sup> Hyper Japan was first held in London in 2010 and has grown to be the largest exhibition of Japanese culture in the UK, with attendances of over 50,000 people every year, despite its entry fees. Since 2014, it has taken place twice a year in summer and winter. I attended Hyper Japan at Tobacco Dock in winter 2017, on its second day. Visitors must choose a day and time, as ticket prices vary depending on the time. The event was full, mostly with a non-Japanese audience, and took place over two floors. The big stage was on the ground floor of the venue while most food stalls

<sup>129</sup> <https://sanshinkai.uk>, accessed 22 April 2021.

<sup>130</sup> <http://crossmedia.co.uk/en>, accessed 2 December 2018.



were on the lower-ground floor. There were stalls full of games, animé, fashion, and accessories, some selling K-pop-related products as well. Workshops were also organised, all of which required the payment of additional fees.



**Figure 4.20. A poster of Hyper Japan 2017 (left) and an advertising poster for the next event (right) (author's collection).**

These three festivals have similarities and differences. As for contents, Okinawa Day presents a unique and distinctive regional culture, while Japan Matsuri and Hyper Japan deal with mainstream Japan. Their target audiences are different; Japan Matsuri and Okinawa Day being free public events for all, but Hyper Japan being for a more specific audience that is already aware of Japanese culture. All three rely on substantial sponsorship, from the Embassy of Japan and elsewhere, with two organisations being significant supporters for Japanese cultural activities, namely the Japan Foundation and the Great Britain Sasakawa Foundation. The Japan Foundation sponsored all three festivals in 2016, Hyper Japan in 2017 and Japan Matsuri in 2018, while the Sasakawa Foundation supported Okinawa Day in 2018. With financial support from several companies and organisations, the three Japanese festivals could be held steadily and stably for a long time.

#### **4. Discussion**

Since the Korean Cultural Centre UK (KCCUK) was founded in 2008, Korean cultural events have bifurcated according to the organiser, that is, whether they are organised by the KCCUK or by the immigrant community. Thanks to the full support of the South Korean government, the KCCUK is able to hold various cultural events throughout the year that include music, dance, art, workshops, and so on. Since the main purpose of these events is to promote Korean culture to non-Korean people, most of the programmes are designed for non-Koreans. Due to this reason, the KCCUK is considered to be somewhat disconnected from the members of the Korean diasporic community. However, Koreans also receive benefit from the centre, since they can watch the latest Korean groups at the K-Music Festival and movies at the London Korean Film Festival.

The members of the Korean community also organise various events centred around their local area, that is, New Malden. Each event is presented in a different way depending on the theme of the event and the organisers' plan. New Malden Arts Festival provides a venue for cultural integration for all local residents beyond Koreans. Kingston Welcomes Korea started with good intentions, but did not succeed due to a lack of understanding of its audience. Replacing it, Kingston Korean Festival began in 2016 and has developed every year since, becoming a symbolic event in the borough of Kingston. Unfortunately, the Korean Cultural Day was held only once, in 2016, yet this event was meaningful in that it was the first event where South and North Koreans in London performed together. Although each event has been held in their own way, the purpose of all of these has been the same: raising awareness of Korean culture among the local community. As a result, and much as with other cases where ethnic folklore is brokered for a mainstream population, the latter eventually gains a better understanding and a more tolerant attitude toward the former, that is, their immigrant neighbours (Auerbach 1991, 225). We can say, then, that by holding various festivals, Koreans in London have endeavoured to announce and make known their presence in the local area, helping New Malden become known as London's Koreatown, much as a part of Los Angeles is known as Koreatown in the US.



The three East Asian communities in London have different histories and current situations. There seem to be two factors that distinguish the cultural events that are organised. One is financial support for large-scale festivals. With respect to Japanese cultural festivals, around 100 Japan-related UK-based companies and institutions have been involved in sponsoring Japan Matsuri over that last 10 years, in addition to the organisers receiving governmental support. One festival staff member told me the total amount required is roughly £100k a year,<sup>131</sup> which is large for any one institution or company, so by taking a collective approach, government agencies and companies work together to lighten the burden on each and reduce the risk of discontinuation of the festival itself. Had it not been for sustained financial support, Japan Matsuri could not have continued for ten years. Moreover, as a commercial event organised by the private sector not only to introduce culture but also to bring commercial profit, it is highly likely that it will continue to operate regularly.

The Chinese case is a little different. Although the Chinese government does not support festivals outside China, the UK Chinese festival has been able to run continuously, sponsored by 10 companies in the financial sector such as the Bank of China, the Bank of East Asia, and by Chinese-run casinos. Despite the small number of sponsors, the festival has enough funds to call on each year.

The South Korean government is the most active at promoting its culture among the three East Asian states, with the Korean Cultural Centre UK (KCCUK) receiving full funding for its operation from the South Korean government, although it also needs to secure sponsorship from Korean companies for major events time to time. As a governmental organisation, the KCCUK is a non-profit business, hence, all its activities are fully costed within an annual budget. Thus, the scale of and venue for the events varies depending on the available budget. For instance, in 2015, the festival was held in Trafalgar Square, but it moved to Olympia in 2017 partly because of a smaller budget being available. Certainly, then, the KCCUK may well not be able to hold a large festival annually. Other Korean community festivals also rely to a huge extent on South Korean government funding, from bodies that include the Overseas Korean Foundation.

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<sup>131</sup> Email correspondence on 26 November 2018.

Therefore, if government support is cut off, it is highly likely that the festivals will be forced to stop.

Another factor to consider is the engagement of East Asian communities in cultural events. Although the financial support given by Chinese companies plays a big role in Chinese festivals, the events would not be successful without the active participation and support of the Chinese community. Members volunteer because the festival is a source of national pride, and this, I found when talking to those participating in the festival comes before anything else. Japanese festivals are run in a similar way. Japan Matsuri is organised by five Japan-related bodies mainly led by the Japan Association, an association for members of the Japanese diaspora. Several components are presented by community members and by local people who are deeply connected with it, such as the London Japanese School Choir, the SOAS Minyo Group,<sup>132</sup> and Green Chorus Japanese Women's Choir. According to Russell Totten, one of the organisers from the Japanese Chamber of Commerce in the UK, all the work is voluntary. Again, the London Okinawa Day is mainly organised and led by the local Japanese community, helped by local professionals. Compared to Chinese and Japanese festivals, Korean festivals tend to bring more artists from the homeland and use fewer local people. In fact, all the performers for the London Korean Festival in 2015 and 2017 were brought from South Korea, and there was no involvement by local artists. The decision to bring artists from abroad has both positive and negative aspects: it can present more up-to-date contemporary culture, but it requires a large budget. Meanwhile, using local artists saves money and boosts community cohesion, but can lead to uninspiring and repetitive presentations. The artistic ability of local performers may also be a matter of concern, since not all will be professionally trained, and their skills may be challenged by audiences. Despite this, why do so many cultural festivals include local choirs and ensembles? I speculate, firstly, that symbolic elements in festival performance are considered more important than technical abilities, since most festivals are held in open-air venues with various events happening simultaneously. This means that there is a

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<sup>132</sup> According to David Hughes (interview, 4 July 2018), the group performs folksongs and was founded in 2013. It is open to anyone who likes Japanese folksong and holds regular rehearsals once a week at SOAS.

lot of noise and often poor amplification, and this is in marked contrast to the formal concert hall settings of the K-Music Festival. It is not easy to judge musical proficiency under these circumstances, so performances are as much about display as they are about presenting exotic music, and about instruments and costumes. This, of course, has been found elsewhere and has been documented by other ethnomusicologists (e.g. Merriam 1964, 229-58; Locke 2004, 177-78). Secondly, large-scale festivals that rely on importing artists require larger budgets and are at risk of not being held regularly or even being suspended if the budget is reduced, as Zheng (2010, 198-200) has shown in respect to Chinese events in the United States. Initiatives from local communities can allow events to continue, but only if local performers and volunteers can be recruited. Finding a good balance between relying on support from the homeland and involving local people may, then, be ideal, but there seems to be a choice between whether to organise regular and long-lasting events or high-end one-off spectacles. For Koreans, the Kingston Korean Festival, which began in 2016, proved a breakthrough. Unlike previous events of the same kind, Korean community members as well as local people interested in Korean culture actively participated. This festival has subsequently grown year on year, helped by numerous volunteers and attracting support from diverse places, including Kingston Council. In 2018, its programme included both local performers and performers invited from South Korea.

The practices relating to music production and performance in the three communities differ. This is the result of factors such as immigration history, habits and lifestyles, the level of support from the homeland, and so forth. However, all three communities have something in common, in that they bring their own unique culture, including music and dance, to the forefront in their festivals, in a manner that within Slobin's model would be considered their respective *superculture*. Fusion music (*interculture*) and other types of performances (which can be considered part of the *subculture*) are also presented, but in very limited ways. It is clear, then, that each of the representative *superculture* is the most commonly used means of promoting the existence of an East Asian diaspora in the host country, the UK.

## CHAPTER 5

### **Multiple Levels of Musical Activities 2: Regular Activities in the Community**

Unlike events which happen once in a while, most community activities run on a regular basis, and more closely relate to everyday life. Some people mark their presence in a society through musical activities (Finnegan 2007, 339), and others develop abilities through diverse activities in cohesive social groups (Turino 2008, 96). Among others, music gives numerous advantages in terms of gaining confidence, having the opportunity to demonstrate skills, enhancing social interaction and friendship, escaping everyday life, and receiving spiritual fulfilment (Pitts 2005, 10). Through group music activities such as choirs and ensembles, people can feel a sense of belonging, which is vital for mental health (Hagerty et al. 1992). Music is a medium of social relation (DeNora 2000, 14-16), and for individuals participating, music activities play a significant role in the formation of social identities that make a group unique (Turino 2008, 2).

Diasporic communities worldwide run music groups which aim to share music and sentiments of nostalgia among community members, and transmit their cultural heritage (Zheng 2010, 171). For instance, Polka music groups in Wisconsin, US, have generated an ethnic revival movement among Czech Americans (Leary 1997) while West Indian steelbands in New York construct ethnic solidarity and transmit values to younger generations (Averill 1997). Similarly, *mariachi* ensembles in southern US states have made the genre the emblem of Mexican identity (Sheehy 1997). There are a number of immigrant music groups in London. For instance, the Green Chorus Japanese Women's Choir has been running over 30 years, the London Youlan *Qin* Society was established in 2003 by a London-based Chinese musician, Cheng Yu, and is open to anyone interested in traditional Chinese music. Koreans have also actively organised musical activities that range from singing in choirs to instrumental ensembles. It is important to establish how and why such groups are organised, who participates in them, what roles groups play in a community, and how they embrace the host society through music. In this section, I explore the Korean

groups in London and describe how they operate and contribute to the Korean community and beyond.

### **1. Arirang Gayageum Ensemble**

The Arirang Gayageum Ensemble was first organised in 2013 by Park Jong-Min, former head of the University of the Third Age for Koreans (UTAK), as part of the activities for Korean seniors at the Korean Community Centre. The UTAK began with a lecture by the head and a singing class led by a volunteer every Friday. As time passed, the popularity grew, and UTAK expanded to eight programmes every Friday and Saturday by 2015. During its initial stage, Park saw a *gayageum* performance and suggested UTAK should organise a *gayageum* group led by the performer Choi Seo-young, who had initially come to the UK as a Christian missionary. This was the starting point of the group. Unfortunately, Choi left the UK in 2014, before I commenced my research, but I have collected accounts from the first year from some of her students. Only a few students had their own instruments initially, and more instruments were required to properly run the class. Generally, buying instruments is the most difficult part of running a traditional music group overseas, and it becomes harder to do when instruments are big and expensive; they need to be imported from the home country. Students who did not have an instrument ordered them, and they were shipped together to save money.

Choi taught traditional folksongs as well as Christian hymns in the style of *gayageum byungchang* (singing while playing the *gayageum*). She did not use staff notation, in order to keep to the traditional way of teaching, this is, by oral transmission, and although students did not mind her approach, they felt it took too long to master a piece. She taught hymns through the instrument, matching her original purpose in coming to the UK, which caused some concern among students who did not want a Christian element in their studies. Some eventually left the class. The class operated for about a year but stopped when Choi left. When I visited the centre in 2016 to conduct an interview, I found the *gayageum* group was continuing, albeit not very effectively given those participants did not have an instructor. In fact, if an instructor is considered the equivalent to a conductor in such a group, it is obvious that a group cannot properly function

without an instructor, a matter that Finnegan highlights in respect to music in Milton Keynes (2007, 237). No members were professional players nor had any members with sufficient previous musical experience to lead the group. Although many these days learn music through the Internet, most members considered such a method difficult and burdensome, especially for the older generation. As a result, they could only play one or two minutes of five pieces which they had previously learned from Choi. After the teacher left, the members did not meet regularly, but gathered occasionally just to review the pieces they had previously learned.

My visit to the centre served as a trigger to resume the *gayageum* class as part of the UTAK programme. I decided to teach traditional folksongs with the *gayageum*, using staff notation. Reflecting on this, although Bartok mentions that 'the only true notations are the sound-tracks on the record itself' (1951, 3), it is undeniable that we have a limited tonal memory (List 1974, 353). Although folk music was traditionally transmitted orally/aurally without notation, many folk repertoires have since the 1960s been transcribed using Western notation for education and preservation purposes (J.-y. Yi 2011, 89). With this in mind, learning from notation is one of the best means of teaching; it can ensure new learning remains with the students for a longer period than when aural/oral instruction alone is employed. Notation is often considered necessary in modern, conservatoire teaching, since it enables a student to learn the basic piece efficiently (2008, 48). Also, it is difficult to find someone who can play as well as teach traditional music and instruments far from the home country, and in small and remote communities, it is even harder to find such individuals. Nevertheless, it is important for students to carry on practising during a teacher's absence. Given this, music notation is useful as a long-term memory aid. Thus, learning with notation is a possible solution to allow students to continue musical activities, especially during an instructor's absence.

Between June 2016 and December 2017, I taught 18 songs with the *gayageum*; traditional folksongs, children's songs, Christmas carols and a North Korean folksong – taking the opportunity of having North Korean refugees in the group. Due to the general prohibition against using North Korean materials by the South Korean government, those living in South Korea are not able to listen

to North Korean music. However, I considered this to be a simple way of understanding and narrowing the cultural distance between South and North Koreans in the one London community. I recorded the singing of North Korean members and transcribed it as a *gayageum* score; I used only songs praising nature, none with any embedded North Korean ideology. One of the songs was 'Gyeongchido jochiman salgido jonne/The scenery is good, but it is also good to live', shown in Figure 5.1. Although I had never previously heard North Korean folksongs, I found many similarities to southern folksongs. For instance, this song is pentatonic (Do, Re, Mi, Sol, La), using the same scale as South Korean folksongs, specifically the mode typical of the Gyeonggi region, *gyeongtori*. In respect to the rhythm, the song is in compound meter, which is one of the most common rhythmic patterns of South Korean folksongs. In fact, many *gayageum byeongchang* pieces in North Korea retain similarities with southern pieces, despite musical discrepancies between North and South. For instance, the melody of the North Korean 'Maebongsan taryeong/Song of Maebong mountain' is close to the *gyeongtori* mode while some of 'Bbongddareo gase/Let's go picking mulberries' shares the same melody as an equivalent South Korean piece (J.-Y. Hwang et al. 2002, 116).

The existence of the *gayageum* ensemble became known in the community and its members often received invitations to perform at local events. The name, Arirang Gayageum Ensemble, was chosen through a discussion among members. They wanted to create a name which would be memorable enough for British people, as well as symbolising their Korean identity. A few names were suggested, but 'Arirang' was selected because of its status as a representative traditional folksong which is used to express hopes for reunification and a single Korean identity (Y. Yu 2007, 262). It is undeniable that 'Arirang' has a special meaning for Koreans all over the world. It became well-known by being employed as the music for joint North and South Korean parades at 10 global sports events: the Sydney Olympics in 2000, Busan Asian Games in 2002, Aomori Winter Asian Games in 2003, Daegu Summer Universiade in 2003, Athens Olympics in 2004, Macau East Asian Games in 2005, Torino Winter Olympics in 2006, Doha Asian Games in 2006, Changchun Winter Asian Games in 2007, and the Pyeongchang Winter Olympics in 2018.

# 경치도 좋지만 살기도 좋네 (Gyeongchido jochiman salgido jonne)

Gayageum score

북한 민요 (North Korean folksong)  
Arranged by Cholong Sung

The image shows a musical score for a Gayageum, a traditional Korean zither. The score is written in a single staff with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a time signature of 8/8. The melody is transcribed with Korean lyrics underneath. The lyrics are: 경치도 좋지만 살기도 좋네 (Gyeongchido jochiman salgido jonne). The score is divided into measures, with measure numbers 5, 9, 13, 17, and 21 indicated. The lyrics are: 경치도 (Gyeongchi do), 좋지만 (jochi man), 살기도 (salgi do), 좋네 (jonne). The score is arranged by Cholong Sung.

**Figure 5.1. Gayageum score ‘Gyeongchido jochiman salgido jonne/The scenery is good, but it is also good to live’ (transcribed by the author).**

Since the ensemble was reformed, its members have actively performed in both private and public spaces. In June 2016, they were invited by a Korean living in East Sussex to a private event introducing Korean culture to her neighbours. Around 40 local elderly people with no prior experience of Korean music were invited and enjoyed this novel cultural experience from the Far East. The group was also invited to community events organised by local associations such as Refugee Action Kingston,<sup>133</sup> the Korean Information Centre,<sup>134</sup> and Burlington

<sup>133</sup> A local charity providing advice and support for refugees and asylum seekers in the Kingston area, <http://www.refugeeactionkingston.org.uk>, accessed 12 April 2018.

<sup>134</sup> A local charity providing language and social services for Koreans, <http://www.koreaninformationcentre.org>, accessed 12 April 2018.



School in New Malden, where they played traditional folksongs with the *gayageum* as well as well-known English songs such as ‘Greensleeves’. The ensemble indeed ‘provides vehicles for the members to “act out” their chosen heritage’ (after Solis 2004, 5). Table 5.1 shows how the ensemble took on active roles in the community.

Date	Title	Organiser
20 <sup>th</sup> June 2016	Korean cultural event	Individual (Private event)
20 <sup>th</sup> June 2016	25 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration	Refugee Action Kingston
15 <sup>th</sup> August 2016	Korean Resettlement Programme Graduation Ceremony	Korean Information Centre
5 <sup>th</sup> October 2016	International Day	Burlington School
22 <sup>nd</sup> October 2016	Korean Cultural Evening	<i>Yeonghanhoe</i> (Association of Korean Communities in the UK)
19 <sup>th</sup> November 2016	Lectures on a wish for united Korea	National Unification Advisory Council
5 <sup>th</sup> May 2017	Korean Parents Day Celebration	Korean Senior Association
16 <sup>th</sup> September 2017	Kingston Full Moon Festival	Korean British Cultural Exchange

**Table 5.1. List of events that the Arirang Gayageum Ensemble participated in between 2016 –2017.**

Besides contributing to the local community, the members overcame and broke through cultural boundaries between South and North Korea by sharing a common interest and aim. Getting along with each other was not easy for citizens from the two Koreas, due to the huge cultural and ideological gap resulting from a sustained period of severed relations at state level. However, many folksongs remain in both states and the members share the same sentiments by wanting to play music together. Although some songs have changed during the 75 years since Korea’s division, the members tried to understand each other. Apart from the purely musical aspects, meeting once every week and spending time together was meaningful in itself. I have encountered many prejudices against each group within the community, and this seems to be amplified when people have little contact with each other. However, the ensemble proved that South and North Koreans can meet peacefully and be harmonious through music.



**Figure 5.2. Arirang Gayageum Ensemble performing at the Kingston Korean Festival in 2017 (photo by the author).**

## **2. Youn Hwa Sa Samulnori Team**

A *samulnori* Korean percussion quartet exists at Youn Hwa Sa, the sole Korean Buddhist temple in London. The music which it plays has no association with Buddhism or any other religion, although it is a voluntary group organised by temple members who are interested in the genre. Taking advantage of a professional Korean percussionist, Choi Jeung-hyun, living in London and being a member of the temple, they organised the group at the end of 2015. Most members are middle-aged Koreans who have been living in the UK for at least five years in diverse occupations. However, as people living far away from their home country, many of those I have engaged with express a yearning for Korean culture, and this led them to learn this particular music.

At first, they learned basic rhythms once a week at Choi's house. Once they had learned this for a while, they occasionally gathered to practice together under the direction of Choi. Around 10 people were taught from her, and four have become core members, this being the minimum number required to play the music. One of the members mentioned that they got to know each other through religious activity, and became closer by playing *samulnori* together.<sup>135</sup> They play

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<sup>135</sup> Interview on 22 October 2018 at Kingston.

both for personal enjoyment and in public. As *samulnori* is a genre which requires synchronisation between four players, Choi rehearses with selected members when she receives a call for a performance. Although other members are not professional unlike their leader, they have been practising together for a long time and work in perfect harmony. At the Kingston Full Moon Festival in 2016, all the members assembled for a *gillori* traditional opening parade led by Choi. The Youn Hwa Sa Samulnori Team and some of the members of the Korean Drumming Society from SOAS, University of London, performed together since the parade requires as many people as possible. One member mentioned to me that ‘it was not easy to practice together, but we made it finally. It was fun and was a great chance to present traditional Korean culture to British people.’<sup>136</sup> Unfortunately, however, the group is not active any longer due to the absence of core members and a health issue of the leader, Choi.



**Figure 5.3. Youn Hwa Sa Samulnori Team performing with the SOAS Korean drumming society members at the Kingston Korean Festival in 2016 (courtesy of the Korean British Cultural Exchange).**

### **3. The *janggu* and *minyo* group**

No percussion class or group for Korean adults existed in London besides the Youn Hwa Sa Samulnori Team, in spite of many people desiring to learn the drum. Park Jong-min, the head of UTAK, therefore decided to organise a *janggu* (double-

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<sup>136</sup> Casual conversation at the festival on 17 September 2016.

headed hourglass-shaped drum) class in December 2016. He asked Choi Jeung-hyun to teach, and rented a hall at the New Malden URC Church since it would be impossible to play at the Korean Community Centre due to the loud sounds of the instrument. Those eager to learn bought their own instruments and joined the group. Fortunately, with the Internet, these were easily ordered on a Korean instrument company website. Once the group had been formed, Choi decided to teach basic rhythmic cycles of traditional folk music such as *semachi* (9/8, ♩. = 100-120) and *gutgeori* (12/8, ♩. = 60-72), rather than *samulnori* rhythms. She did so for three reasons:<sup>137</sup> most members needed to learn from the most basic levels given they had no previous experience; the students were mostly of an older generation and *samulnori* skills might be too difficult to learn from scratch; folksongs are well-known among elderly Koreans since they grew up singing and listening to them, so playing *janggu* to accompany folksong singing would likely be most enjoyable for the group.

Along with teaching *janggu*, Choi also taught *minyo* (folksongs). The members learned several songs, such as 'Baennorae/Fishing song' and 'Bang-ataryeong/Song of milling'. These were familiar to both North and South Korean seniors and had lyrics describing the scenery of hometowns. They also contain passionate sentiments likely to evoke the greatest emotional reactions. The students did not use notation, but learned everything by ear, in the traditional way. With regard to her teaching methods, Choi mentioned to me that she had also learned by ear, and she also considered the age of her students, who with poor eyesight would find it hard to read notation. She believed that learning by ear was more precise and appropriate for singing traditional music as it uses microtones and ornamentation which are difficult to write using Western staff notation. This was a completely different way to teach than the method employed for the *gayageum* group, although both worked on folksongs. Each ensemble, even if performing the same songs, can end up being different, due to their teachers and directors, and their specific goals (Marcus 2004, 204). In the same vein, instructors chose teaching techniques suitable for their ensemble, and justified by their focus. The *janggu* and *minyo* group focuses on listening and

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<sup>137</sup> Interview on 16 February 2017 at New Malden.



making accurate sounds with their voices as they sing, whereas the *gayageum* group plays instruments, using a wider variety of skills that can be prescribed more accurately in notation. In fact, for professional *gugak* in Korea these days most instrumental parts are notated, while vocal traditions including *pansori* tend to keep ‘the oral nature of transmission’ (Yates-Lu 2017, 94). However, this does not mean the students learning vocal music do not use any notation; many make their own, tailored to their personal needs. The elderly citizens also make notes so they can remember the strikes of the *jangu* and lyrics of songs.



**Figure 5.4. The *jangu* and *minyo* group performing at the Korean Arts Festival in 2019 (courtesy of Brian Cowper).**

Beginning with a Parents’ Day event organised by Korean Senior Citizens UK on 5 May 2017, the group has performed at various events, playing *jangu* as well as singing, led by Choi. I had the opportunity to see their performances often, since I was also a performer at the events. At the Korean Arts Festival in 2019, I asked ‘why do you play *jangu*?’ to the members while waiting for the performance. One member, Ji Sun Hee, told me that ‘by singing and playing folksongs, I find great comfort in my longing for my hometown.’ Another, Son Hoja added that ‘I can relieve my personal stress by playing *jangu* and singing loudly. That is why I like playing *jangu*’.<sup>138</sup>

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<sup>138</sup> Personal conversation with the members of the *Jangu* and *Minyo* Group on 4 May 2019.

#### 4. Korean choirs

Most choirs in the Korean community have been run by churches, and only a few are not related to religion. The London Concert Choir was the first non-religious choir established in the community. It was first organised in October 1995 by Seok Il-soo (a.k.a William Seok), who was the 29th chairperson of the Korean Residents Society, and officially launched in a ceremony at Christ Church Centre in New Malden.<sup>139</sup> According to Seok, the choir aimed to share comfort and joy among the community, and to act as a bridge between Korean and British people.<sup>140</sup> As Finnegan points out, there are various requirements for managing a community choir, such as having a conductor, accompanist, a place for rehearsals, finance, and meeting the social needs of members (2007, 237). Hence, the choir recruited a conductor, Im Hak-bin, who held a Master's degree in conducting from Thames Valley University (now the University of West London). Members were gathered by advertising in local Korean-language newspapers. Those who wanted to join the choir auditioned by singing either a designated song, '*Gohyang-ui bom*/Spring of hometown,' or another song of their choice.<sup>141</sup> Fortunately, the group was able to secure a place for regular rehearsal at the KCCB, so they met every Tuesday evening at 8pm.

They held their debut on 26 October 1996 at Bourne Hall, Ewell, under the name of the Korean London Concert Choir (KLCC). They gave several *gagok* art songs (influenced by German Lied) including '*Geurium*/Longing' and Christian hymns and contemporary Christian music. Although it was not a religious event, they sang Christian music as most members were Christian. It is also common in the Korean community to enjoy Christian music in public regardless of the presence of non-Christians. The KLCC always invited some professional guest musicians to perform with them, in an effort to ensure a high-quality concert with great variety. They have tried to remain active, holding at least one concert every year despite constant changes in conductor and members caused by some returning to Korea.

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<sup>139</sup> *Korean Weekly*, 19 October 1995.

<sup>140</sup> Email correspondence on 1 August 2019.

<sup>141</sup> *Korean Weekly*, 17 August 1995.

Date	Title	Venue
19 Dec 1995	Guest performance at the Year-end Party for Koreans	Wandsworth Town Hall
25 May 1996	Joint concert with Surbiton Male Voice Choir	St. Mark's Church, Surbiton
13 Jul 1996	Guest performance at the Anglo-Korean Festival	Korean Cultural Centre in Britain
26 Oct 1996	KLCC Opening Concert	Bourne Hall, Ewell
7 Dec 1996	Guest performance at the Year-end Party for Koreans	Wandsworth Town Hall
24 May 1997	Spring Concert	St. Matthew's Church Hall, Raynes Park
6 Dec 1997	Christmas Concert	Trinity United Reformed Church, Wimbledon
13 Dec 1997	Invited performance in Wales	All Nations Centre, Cardiff
28 Nov 1998	Annual Concert	Bourne Hall, Ewell
10 Jul 1999	Sacred Music Concert	Wimbledon Trinity Church
17 Jul 1999	Guest performance at the Korean Festival	Fairfield Park, Kingston
13 Nov 1999	5 <sup>th</sup> Annual Concert	Trinity United Reformed Church
2000 – 2005	Annual Concert	Various venue
2006 – 2014	Inactivity	
15 Aug 2015	Summer Concert	Bourne Hall, Ewell
2016 – 2020	Inactivity	

**Table 5.2. List of concerts of the Korean London Concert Choir.**

Despite their efforts there was, though, an extended period of inactivity for nine years before the KLCC was able to resume rehearsing in June 2015. As before, recruitment advertisements were posted in the local Korean-language newspapers. Following rehearsals for two months, they held a Summer Concert in 15 August 2015 at Bourne Hall, celebrating the 20th anniversary of their founding. Around 20 members performed, despite 40 names being listed on the programme. All were amateur singers, while the conductor, pianist, and tenor were UK-based professional musicians, and the soprano was based in France. The guest performers each gave a solo. According to one choir member, most of them had only recently joined so that they could take part in the concert.<sup>142</sup>

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<sup>142</sup> Interview with Lee Jung-hwan on 29 August 2015.

**고향의 봄**  
*Spring of Home*

이원수 요  
출판사

조금 느리게

나 의 살 던 고향 은 꽃 피 는 산 골  
Na aei sal dun Ko Hyang eun Kot pi neun san kohl  
My home town where I grew up was a flowering town

복 송 아 꽃 살 구 꽃 — 아 기 진 달 래  
Bog soong ah kot Sal gu Kot Ah gi zin dal - leh  
Peaches, apricots fully blossom there Pink baby Azalia too

울 굴 불 굴 꽃 — 대 굴 자 린 — 동 네  
Wool good bool good Kot- dae gual cha ree-n dong neh  
Royal gardens full of colors everywhere in the town

그 속 에 서 놀 던 때 가 그 립 습 니 다  
Geu sog eh suh Nol dun ddeh ga Keu rip seup nee- da  
To those playful days with my buddies. Oh how I wish to return

## SUMMER CONCERT

### Korean London Concert Choir

가곡과 아리아의 밤  
열린 우정 음악회



Conductor Jason J.H Bae  
Piano Grace J.E. Oh  
Guests Tenor Jung Soo Yun  
Soprano Deubora Jeong

29 August 2015 at 7.30pm  
Bourne Hall, Spring Street, Ewell, Surrey KT17 1UF

주최 : 재영 한인 협창단 Korean London Concert Choir  
후원 : Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames  
협찬: W & CLS, FUEL, Vocal Views, Fleetfingers

**Figure 5.5. Programme of the Korean London Concert Choir's Summer Concert (right) and 'Gohyang-ui bom/Spring in the hometown' score in the programme (left) (author's collection).**

The concert was divided into two halves – Korean songs in the first and Western songs in the second. In the first half, the choir sang four *gagok*, 'Nimi osineunji/Whether my love comes,' with music and lyrics by Go Sa-nam, 'Geurium/Longing' by Lee Su-in to lyrics by Park Mok-weol, 'Boribat/Barley field' by Yun Yong-ha to lyrics by Park Hwa-mok, and 'Namchon/Southern village' composed by Kim Gyu-hwan to lyrics by Kim Dong-hwan. The tenor and soprano guests gave 'Baennorae/Fishing song' by Cho Doo-nam and 'Sin arirang/New Arirang' by Kim Dong-jin (with lyrics by Yang Myeong-moon), respectively, along with a famous opera aria. In the second half, the choir sang two well-known songs, 'Torna a Sorrento' by Ernesto De Curtis (with lyrics by Giambattista De Curis) and 'Oh Happy Day' from the arrangement for the soundtrack to the movie *Sister Act 2*. The soprano and the tenor sang solos as well as a duet. For the finale, the choir asked the audience to sing along to 'Gohyang-ui bom/Spring in the hometown', to the notation and lyrics printed on the last page of the concert programme.



I interviewed Jason Bae, the conductor, and Lee Jung-hwan, a choir member.<sup>143</sup> Bae had joined the choir in 2015 at the choir leader's suggestion. He was originally a pianist, and regarded conducting as good experience for him since he was learning conducting. Lee also joined in 2015, encouraged to do so by one of his friends – this is a common route for joining community groups (Finnegan 2007, 237-39; Zheng 2010, 176). Both agreed that the most difficult element in preparing the concert was arranging mutually convenient practice schedules for everyone, due to the large number of choir members. Bae added that the different singing abilities and levels of experience were challenges for him as a conductor, given the limited practice time. All these factors influenced his selection of songs. Unfortunately, the KLCC discontinued activities again after this concert, presumably because they had no conductor. Bae did not continue his involvement and Seok, as choir leader, could not find the right person to take over. It is, though, possible that the choir will resume its activities in the future.

In place of the KLCC, the London Korean Choral Society (LKCS) was set up in March 2017 by Lim Sun-hwa, a chairperson of Korean Senior Citizens UK. She had been in a local choir and considered it worthwhile to have a Korean choir in the community,<sup>144</sup> so began to search for a conductor. Someone recommended Yu Byung-yun, the conductor of the Thames Philharmonia, and she asked him to become their musical director as well as conductor. He accepted and an advertisement recruiting members was posted in the Korean-language newspapers. Only two or three people came at first, but the numbers gradually grew, due in part to several former members of the KLCC joining. By the end of 2019, around 12 people attend regularly out of 20 registered members. Most have had previous choral experience, either through studying music or as members of church choirs. The LKCS holds two-hour rehearsals every Monday evening. They used to gather at the Korean Community Centre near Raynes Park but moved to the hall of Korean Senior Citizens UK on New Malden High Street in January 2018. They began by practicing Korean songs such as Kim Dong-jin's '*Suseonhwa*/Narcissus' (with lyrics by Kim Dong-myeong) and '*Arirang*', believing Korean lyrics would be easier for the members. Soon afterwards, they

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<sup>143</sup> Interview on 29 August 2015 at Ewell.

<sup>144</sup> Interview on 19 March 2018 at New Malden.

started work on opera repertoire. The director required all members to study pieces in the book *Opera Choruses*,<sup>145</sup> to reach a certain standard of singing. Thus, members practised 'Habanera' from *Carmen*, 'Chorus of wedding guests' from *Lucia di Lammermoor*, and 'Chorus of the Hebrew slaves' from *Nabucco*, guided by the director.

The LKCS held their first concert in December 2017 at St. James Church in New Malden. A professional soprano acquainted with the director was invited from Italy to perform a solo and sing with the choir. Some members of the Thames Philharmonia, which the director conducts, participated as guest performers. The concert was successful, with a full audience, and they soon organised a second concert in collaboration with the Thames Philharmonia in Teddington in March 2018, giving another concert in Eastbourne in July (Figure 5.6). Their increasingly busy schedule gave them goals and encouraged members to practice harder. Besides the LKCS, more choirs were founded in the Korean diaspora in the late 2010s such as choirs for Korean elderly or Korean children.



**Figure 5.6. London Korean Choral Society performing at the Korean Arts Festival in Eastbourne in 2018 (courtesy of Lim Sun-hwa).**

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<sup>145</sup> *Opera Choruses* (1995), edited by John Rutter, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

## 5. Korean Artists Association UK

The Korean Artists Association UK (KAAUK) was founded in 1997 by six Koreans from different art fields, and was focused on promoting friendship among Korean artists in the UK as well as nourishing the Korean community.<sup>146</sup> It was first set up under the name *Jaeyeong Hanin Yesurinhoe* (lit. UK-Korean Artists Association), but the name was changed to *Jaeyeong Hanin Yesurin Hyeophoe* in 1998, with the official English name remaining the same. The membership requirement was having more than three years' career as an artist and having a UK visa valid for a year or more. Nine people served as chairperson up to 2017 (Table 5.3).

Duration	Name	Occupation
1997 – 2001	Jae-young Choi	Painter
2002 – 2005	Myeon-hoe Kim	Art administrator
2006 – 2007	Yonok Chang	<i>Gayageum</i> player
2008	Francesca Cho	Painter
2009 – 2010	Sun-Hee Park	Traditional Korean dancer
2011 – 2012	Soon Yul Kang	Visual artist
2013 – 2014	Ji-Eun Jung	<i>Gayageum</i> player
2015 – 2016	Jeung Hyun Choi	Samulnori player
2017 – 2018	Sanggun Kim	Motion graphic designer

**Table 5.3. Chairpersons of the Korean Artists Association UK.**

Until 2007, the association had only organised a few activities, but it then became more active with the opening of the Korean Cultural Centre UK, which provided them with a space for an annual exhibition and performance. The KAAUK covers three fields – visual, performance, and general arts – and each sub-group prepares for the annual event separately based on a specific theme which changes every year. The visual arts team installs pieces in the KCCUK exhibition hall, and the performance and general art teams present a small concert, usually on the first day of the exhibition as an opening concert. The first theme was ‘An invitation to an evening of Korean culture,’ and the event was held in June 2008. The performance was presented by eight association members and included violin, piano, *gayageum*, guitar, traditional dance, poetry, and a Taekwondo

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<sup>146</sup> <http://koreanartists.co.uk>, accessed 12 March, 2018.

demonstration. The event held on the following year had the same title and followed a similar format. Only since 2010, has the annual event been held under themes that change every year. Table 5.4 lists their annual exhibitions and performances.

Year	Title
2008	An Invitation to an Evening of Korean Culture
2009	An Invitation to an Evening of Korean Culture
2010	Invisible Bonds; <i>I-eum-sae</i>
2011	Delayed Sojourn – London, Home away from home
2012	Five Cardinal Colours; <i>O-bang-saek</i>
2013	Collaboration; <i>Hap</i>
2014	Korean Chronicles
2015	Arirang
2017	I, kid; <i>Woori eoriljeok</i> (when we were young)

**Table 5.4. List of annual events held by the Korean Artists Association UK between 2008 – 2017.**

The KAAUK has been able to present its events regularly thanks to the support and exhibition space provided by the KCCUK, the only exception being in 2016 when there was a timetable clash at the centre. I became a member and participated in annual events from 2015 onwards. We gathered on the first Saturday of each month in 2015 and once every two months in 2016 at the KCCUK. Our meetings shared information about personal activities and announced any changes to the association, but mainly discussed the annual events. At each first meeting after the annual event, we discussed lessons learned, as well as the theme of the next event. Committee members also have meetings with KCCUK staff to discuss annual events. Once the date is fixed, the committee checks the availability of members, as many will frequently be absent from the UK since, taking advantage of the UK's geographical position, they work actively throughout Europe. They also often return to their home country, Korea. Once the participating members are confirmed, exhibition and performance teams begin to prepare. The programme changes each year and is limited by the availability of participants. However, the association always aims to present variety in performance and to showcase collaborations between members, including mixes of Korean and Western music or dance. New pieces by Korean composers based

in the UK are occasionally presented. The annual performances offer unique experiences, giving presenters the chance to create and showcase new repertoires.



**Figure 5.7. Korean Artists Association's Exhibition and Performance Flyer in 2017 (author's collection).**

The KAAUK runs well, albeit with two significant limitations. The first is that the association is in charge of no other event, but only the annual exhibition and performance. This has been raised as an issue in several meetings, where discussions have suggested that each member organises a workshop for a month or two to promote the association and make it more active. However, finding a suitable space and recruiting volunteers to assist with workshops is not easy. The association, as a non-profit organisation, has limited budget for renting a venue. As for members' time, finding spare time to run workshops is difficult as they have their own careers to develop. A member is needed to take charge of running

workshops conscientiously and regularly, but members are reluctant to do so. The second issue is that the association relies heavily on the KCCUK. Alongside providing a space, the centre also gives financial support to print brochures and programmes for events. On occasions, the KAAUK has also received funds from the British Korean Society and private companies, although these are not constant sources of support and the amounts involved are usually barely enough to hold a single event. If the KCCUK ceased to support the association, the association would find itself in a very precarious situation. Unfortunately, the KAAUK stopped all activities after the 2017 exhibition due to an internal dispute.

Like the KAAUK, other artists' organisations operate in immigrant communities in London. For example, the UK Chinese Arts Association<sup>147</sup> was founded in 2014 to provide a platform and facilitate networking among Chinese artists; it focuses on art only, rather than other fields. There are, though, four Chinese music groups: the UK Chinese music ensemble, the Silk and Bamboo Ensemble, the Silk String Quartet, and the London Youlan Qin Society.<sup>148</sup> Indian cultural organisations operate on a much larger scale with the support of British organisations such as the Arts Council England. South Asian Arts UK<sup>149</sup> was founded in 1997 to promote Indian classical music and dance. They organise concerts and projects, as well as developing relationships between Indian artists. Darbar Arts Culture Heritage Trust<sup>150</sup> has been organising Indian cultural and education events, and providing a platform for Indian artists in the UK and India. As Stephen Cottrell points out, such organisations can be status symbols for artists, and reinforce their sense of belonging (2004, 12). Particularly, they can have great significance for immigrant musicians who want to play music from their own homeland, as they can increase the chances of being engaged to perform, and artists can promote themselves through the organisation.

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<sup>147</sup> <http://www.ukcaa.com/>, accessed 13 February 2020.

<sup>148</sup> <http://www.ukchinesemusic.com/ukce.htm>, accessed 13 February 2020.

<sup>149</sup> <http://www.saa-uk.org>, accessed 13 February 2020.

<sup>150</sup> <http://www.darbar.org>, accessed 13 February 2020.

## 6. Arirang Yesuldan (Arirang art troupe)

Arirang Yesuldan is the first North Korean art group to be formed in London. It was established in 2017 by Kim Hyunju, a lady in her early 60s. According to Kim, she suddenly became a shaman after suffering from a disease while serving as a teacher in North Korea.<sup>151</sup> She urgently had to escape North Korea as rumours about her following outlawed superstition spread across town. Since any religious activities were prohibited, there would be severe consequences for anyone caught carrying out such practices. She stayed in China for around 18 months, then moved to South Korea for nine years. She came to the UK in May 2015 and after two years in Manchester settled in New Malden. She found it sad that no North Koreans were involved with any cultural activities due to their heavy work commitments. She therefore organised the *Bukhan minsok seon-gyo yesuldan* (North Korean missionary folk-art troupe), to make it possible for the community to enjoy North Korean performances together. The name soon changed to Arirang Yesuldan as some thought the inclusion of 'North Korea' in their name deterred people from taking an interest. The group currently has 12 members, all from North Korea. During its initial stage, they practised at a Korean restaurant in New Malden almost daily in the morning before the restaurant opened, but now rehearse once a week on Saturdays. Kim teaches the *jangu* drum and dance:

I have been dancing since I was six years old and always danced for the New Year celebrations in North Korea. At first, I taught basic movements and later moved on to several repertoires which included 'Buchaechum/fan dance' and 'Jangguchum/drum dance.' I also know more pieces such as 'Arirang', 'Muldong-i chum/Water pitcher dance', 'Sarang sarang nae-sarang/Love, love, my love', 'Chanyangchum/Missionary dance' and 'Mokdong-gwa cheonyeo/Herdsman and a lady', which I created to suit the circumstances I faced here (interview, December 2017, New Malden).

This group has been active performing, and many churches have invited them to present North Korean music and dance, which is rarely seen outside North Korea.

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<sup>151</sup> Interview on 2 December 2017 in New Malden.



On 12 August 2018, Arirang Yesuldan had their second anniversary concert at the hall of St. James Church in New Malden, inviting three professional North Korean artists – two dancers and a musician – living in South Korea to perform with them. It seemed strange that they were already holding a second anniversary concert, having only been formed in 2017. I enquired about this to one of the members, and she answered that it would be strictly speaking a celebration of their second year to come. They promoted their concerts in the local Korean-language newspapers as well as online.



**Figure 5.8. Arirang Yesuldan performing at their 2nd anniversary concert in 2018 (photo by the author).**

The concert was held in the evening. Tickets cost £10, and included a North Korean buffet after the show. More people came than expected, so some had to stand to watch. The concert began with an introduction by a compere, as there was neither an official flyer nor a printed programme. It continued with singing the South Korean national anthem. As mentioned earlier, singing the national anthem, pledging allegiance to the national flag, is common to kick off many events held in the Korean community, although it was indeed unusual to hear it sung at an event organised by North Koreans. The compere then introduced the supporting organisations; ten individuals and groups were sponsors, including both the Korean Residents Society and the North Korean Residents Society. Gwak



Jung-A, the president of Arirang Yesuldan, appeared onstage and introduced the group's aims and achievements.

The first piece was '*Tong-il mujigae/Reunification rainbow*,' sung by six members. This song expresses the deep desire for reunification of the two Koreas. Members wore dresses and sang to the accompaniment of a *karaoke* machine. '*Muldong-i chum/Water pitcher dance*' followed, performed by two professional dancers, based on a North Korean folk dance which depicts how women draw water from wells. The third piece was a North Korean pop song given as a solo, '*Simjang-e namneun saram/Person left in my heart*,' accompanied on the accordion. The concert continued with the *janggu* drum played by four members. They played very basic traditional rhythmic patterns such as *hwimori* (4/4, ♩ = 180-200) and *gutgeori* (12/8, ♩ = 60-72), singing the folksong '*Nodeulgangbyeon/Riverside of Nodeul*' to the rhythmic pattern *semachi* (9/8, ♩ = 100-120). Two professional dancers took to the stage again for '*Jogae chum/Clam dance*,' which takes its name from dancers holding and clicking metal castanets. The sixth performance was presented by Park Sung-jin who played the *sohaegeum* – an instrument developed in the 1960s as a mixture of the traditional two-stringed *haegeum* fiddle and the violin, with four metal strings played by a violin bow, and a shape and playing posture resembling the *haegeum*. Park reported that he is the only performer who can still play the instrument, and that the instrument he has is the only one in South Korea. He made a special order for it after he arrived in South Korea. Using it, he played an arrangement of a folksong, '*Ongheya*,' accompanied with electronic background music. After his solo, he collaborated with two members of the Arirang Gayageum Ensemble (which is different from the Arirang Art Troupe discussed above) and a *janggu* player to give '*Ulsan agassi/A lady from Ulsan*' and '*Arirang*'. When they played this last song, the entire audience sang together. Next came a North Korean song, '*Eoseo yeolja tong-ilui muneul/Let's open the gate for reunification*,' sung by four members. Then Park came onstage again to sing a South Korean *trot* song, '*Bbunigo/The only*'. A dance by two members, '*Sarang sarang naesarang/Love, love, my love*,' followed, choreographed by Kim Hyunju and presenting the famous traditional love story of the heroine Chunhyang and her lover Mongryong, accompanied by the song '*Sarangga/Love song*'. The song originally was part of

a *pansori* epic storytelling through song repertoire, although there had once been a North Korean adaptation. Here, the accompaniment was recorded. Then two professional dancers came out to present '*Buchaechum*/Fan dance' accompanied by recorded music – there was an expectation, though, that the dance would be accompanied by more traditional music. The penultimate performance was by Park Sung-jin and two members singing another *trot* song, '*Dangsini joha*/I like you', and the audience again joined in, clapping along to the beat. The final performance was '*Sagyejeol yosulchum*/Magic dance of four seasons', which is the troupe's signature piece. Starting with dance to a famous Korean *trot* song, '*Baekmansong-i jangmi*/Millions of roses' that originated in a Russia melody, they changed costumes on stage in the blink of an eye. I have seen them perform this several times, and they always get a positive response from the audience. After finishing, all the performers came on stage to sing '*Gohyang-ui bom*/Spring of hometown' together.



**Figure 5.9. *Janggu* received from South Korea (left) and after painted in red by North Korean members (right) (courtesy of Brian Cowper and Hugh Griffiths).**

The troupe presented unique insights into North Korea through pop songs and dance numbers, but also utilised *trot* songs and folksongs for the audience's enjoyment. Since the performers and most of the audiences were in their 40s through to their 60s, they were generally more familiar with *trot* and folksongs than with other Korean pop. Besides music, they expressed their identity through vivid and flashy costumes and instruments (the *janggu* painted in red, when, normally, it is given clear varnish or oil in South Korea, and the *sohaegeum*). Indeed, North Koreans are more used to drums being painted red, and they

mentioned that they painted the body when it was received from South Korea. As for the programme, it was natural that because the troupe was not professional, some of the performances were less than polished. However, the professional North Korean artists living in South Korea provided a higher quality in their pieces. It was also clear that the troupe had made significant efforts to put together a varied repertoire, despite its short history.

## **7. Educational space**

Koreans who arrived in the UK in the 1970s and 1980s are generally regarded as the first immigrant generation, whilst their children, either born in the host country or coming to Britain accompanied by their parents, are considered the second generation. Today, the second generation are in their 20s, 30s or 40s. They received a significant part of their education in Britain, and in effect were 'socialised' as British. At the same time, Korean parents want their children to learn Korean language and culture even when living abroad hoping their descendants will remember their roots. Hence, they send their children to complementary schools for their ethnic education. These are often called 'community language' or 'supplementary' schools, and are important sites of linguistic, cultural and literacy acquisition (Creese 2009, 271). They are at the centre of cultivating an ethnic identity for second and third generation children in a place far from the homeland. Citing case studies of Bengali, Chinese, Gujarati and Turkish communities in the UK, Creese asserts that complementary schools are significant in five respects: providing collective learning, having economic value, teaching heritage, history, and culture, endorsing identity, and valuing bilingualism (2008, 283-84). There is considerable research on complementary schools in the UK, but most focuses on language education (e.g. Li 2006; Lytra and Martin 2010; Francis, Archer, and Mau 2014; Francis, Mau, and Archer 2014). Only one article, by Finch (2009) has been published in relation to Korean complementary schools to date. Finch offers a general overview, analyses the attitudes of students and parents toward the schools, and suggests ways to improve the programmes. Although meaningful in that it was the first study on the subject, his scope is too wide to provide useful details for my discussion, since it does not consider cultural aspects of the schools.

As of 2019, there were 23 Korean complementary schools in the UK, two located in London: the London Korean School in Chessington (*Leondeon Hanguk Hakgyo*) and North London Korean School in Barnet (*Gangbuk Leondeon Hanguk Hakgyo*).<sup>152</sup> The former is oldest and has played a central role in transmitting and cultivating Korean culture and identity for second-generation Koreans since 1972. Over time, it increased in size, opening the latter in 1989, which remains in Barnet. All the complementary schools are partially funded by the Korean Education Centre UK, which is affiliated to the South Korean government. Apart from these, there is another complementary school, the London Korean Nationality School, which was founded in 2016 by the Korean Nationality Residence Society, to serve the increasing number of North Korean refugee children in the UK. This does not belong to the Korean Education Centre UK as its aims are different and most of its students are children of North Koreans. Here, by focusing on the London Korean School in Chessington and the London Korean Nationality School, I investigate how schools operate and what cultural activities they offer. I do not include the Barnet branch, as it is similar to the one in Chessington.

### **7.1. London Korean School**

The London Korean School (LKS) was founded in 1972 under the name *Jaeyeong Eorini Hakgyo* (UK Korean children's school), with a student body of 24. The students attended every other Saturday, learning Korean, children's songs, and folksongs. As the school developed, it changed its name to the current name in 1977. Since then, it has run every Saturday, teaching primary school students, and adhering to the same curriculum as taught in Korea. The number of students rapidly increased in the 1980s due to the influx of sojourning employees to the UK with their families, and the number reached around 350. Until the early 1990s, most students were the children of short-term sojourning employees who would return to Korea within a few years hence they needed to study more than just

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<sup>152</sup> List of Korean complementary schools in the UK, <http://www.koreaneducentreinuk.org/%ED%95%9C%EA%B8%80%ED%95%99%EA%B5%90/%ED%95%9C%EA%B8%80%ED%95%99%EA%B5%90-%EC%86%8C%EA%B0%9C>, accessed 28 November 2019.

language to keep up with the Korean curriculum. The school moved its location frequently, as it did not own its own building. However, since 1997, it has used the Chessington Community College, located across the Surrey county border from London. The number of students by 2017 remained around 350, when 23 classes were offered, depending on age and Korean language ability, from pre-school levels to adult levels. Pre-school students learned language, art, music and physical education, while elementary students focused predominantly on language and history, along with mathematics, using Korean course books. Above middle school level, students often drop out of a complementary school due to homework and other requirements of their everyday school.

According to the LKS head teacher, although 90 percent of students during the 1970-1980s were children of migrant workers, today this is true of only around 25 percent.<sup>153</sup> The change in the student body has necessitated changing the curriculum so, where in the past, the focus was more on strictly following the Korean national curriculum, now teaching Korean language and culture is given a higher priority. However, the school still follows the national curriculum, using official Korean textbooks. Many parents complain about this, but the head teacher reported there was no other option. It would be ideal if the school had a special textbook for second-generation students, but to prepare one would cost a substantial amount of money and time.

Music has been taught since the school was founded. According to the school's website,<sup>154</sup> students used to have workshops on traditional Korean music, and took part in dance sessions when Korean groups visited London, in addition to regular classes. The students not only cultivate their Korean identity at the school, but also participate in community events and festivals, including one event to celebrate Queen Elizabeth II's Golden Jubilee in 2002, where they wore traditional costumes (*hanbok*), sang and danced. Despite such activities in the past, the school has not always provided music education, due to staff shortages or when students fell behind in other subjects such as language, history,

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<sup>153</sup> Interview on 30 April 2016.

<sup>154</sup> History of London Korean School, [http://londonkoreanschool.com/index.php?mid=board\\_TVvt44&category=225](http://londonkoreanschool.com/index.php?mid=board_TVvt44&category=225), accessed 5 June 2019.

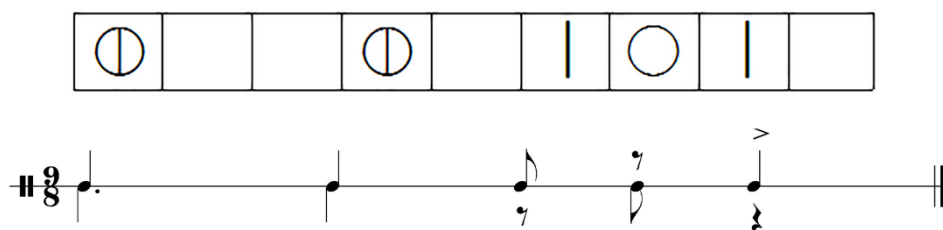
and mathematics. Music and culture ceased to be taught for a long period in the early 2000s, and when I first visited the school, the headmaster told me they had not run separate music classes for some years. It tried to run a choir as an after-school activity, but this was not sustainable due to low participation levels. In fact, the same has applied to most after-school activities, as most students and families have their own plans for Saturday afternoons, so students want to leave right after finishing their classes at 1.30pm. In 2012, it resumed Korean music and dance teaching, albeit only as after-school activities, and then, in 2015, it began to teach traditional percussion as part of the regular curriculum for post-elementary level students. The main reason to choose percussion was the availability of a professional instructor, Choi Jeung-hyun, and the availability of instruments.



**Figure 5.10. Lower elementary students' music class in 2016 (photo by the author).**

According to my observation of music classes of the LKS on 30<sup>th</sup> April 2016, the contents and structure of music classes has varied depending on the age of students. Pre-school students today learn children's songs, and there is one teacher in charge of selecting the songs. She picks one song a month and gives handouts to other teachers who teach it to their classes. The songs are mostly eight- to 16-bars long and are easy to teach, requiring no specific musical knowledge. However, students in a class naturally have different levels of ability, just as the teachers have different musical ability and interest. This results in an

inconsistent level of teaching. If a teacher is not interested, they spend fewer hours teaching the songs and as a result their students miss an opportunity to study and enjoy Korean songs they would otherwise not be exposed to.



**Figure 5.11. *Janggu* score in traditional Korean notation (up) and in Western staff notation (down).**

From the lower elementary level, as with the curriculum in Korea, students start to learn basic Korean rhythms by playing the *sogo* (a small hand-held drum), along with basic movement. They are still too young to learn complex rhythms, but the *sogo* provides an early sense of Korean percussion while familiarising students with an instrument. More advanced students learn Korean rhythmic patterns using the four *samulnori* instruments, the *ggwaenggwari* (small gong), *jing* (big gong), *janggu* (double-headed hourglass-shaped drum) and *buk* (barrel drum). Over the course of a year, they have the opportunity to play each of the four instruments. In second grade, each student chooses one of the four and learns the most celebrated *samulnori* piece, *Yeongnam nongak*, derived from and assembling southeastern Gyeongsang province rhythmic patterns. Although *samulnori* repertoire is notated, using both a Korean system and in staff notation (Howard 2015, 113-17), Choi does not use any score, because she believes that boosting student interest and providing an enjoyable, fun experience should come first.<sup>155</sup> Choi also told me that using a score might make students feel that music is merely another subject they must study, and lead to a loss of interest. She feels that developing an interest in music is more important, since students have few opportunities to experience traditional music. She also believes that students have an intuitive ability to absorb any kind of music at a young age; it is

<sup>155</sup> Interview with Choi at the school on 30 April 2016.



true that her students pick up the music much faster than most adults presented with the same material.



**Figure 5.12. London Korean School's Arts Festival in 2016 (photo by the author).**

Since 1996, the school has organised an annual October arts festival to celebrate the 1972 founding of the school. All students participate, performing with classmates. In 2016, this was held at the school atrium on 15<sup>th</sup> October. Eleven items were programmed. Primary students sang three children's songs, with gestures and movement. Three lower grades played *sogo*, danced with folksongs, and gave a *talchum* (masked dance). The advanced groups performed *samulnori* and *buchaechum* (fan dance). The rest of the programme consisted of Taekwondo demonstrations and folk games. The whole programme related to traditional culture, which would otherwise not be readily accessible to those living outside Korea. I randomly selected the audience of the event, and distributed a questionnaire to 43 parents (17 male and 26 female) at the festival. As illustrated in Table 5.5 below, their main reasons for sending children to the complementary school were so their children learned Korean language and cultural education.

Learn Korean language	Learn Korean culture	Meet ethnic peers	Other
28	28	3	5

**Table 5.5. Reasons for sending children to the London Korean School.**



Regarding general attitudes to the festival, 36 parents gave positive responses relating to their satisfaction with Korean culture being included, their children's participation, and so on (Table 5.6). The identical content of the programmes every year was considered negatively, although this is not an issue for the students, since they learn and perform new materials each year.

Positive			Negative	No response
Inclusion of Korean culture	My children's participation	Other	3	4
24	2	10		

**Table 5.6. Opinions on the London Korean School festival.**

Genre	Number of responses
Korean traditional music	7
Korean children's songs	9
Korean music (both traditional and children music)	9
All kinds of music	7
Others	7
No response	4

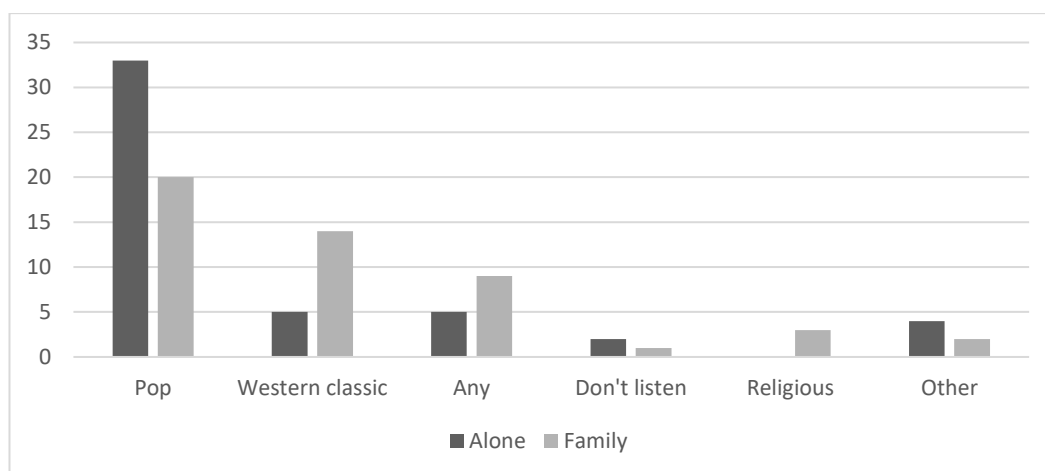
**Table 5.7. Musical genres that parents want their children to learn at the London Korean School.**

Twenty-five parents wanted their children to learn Korean music, whether it be traditional *gugak* or children's songs (Table 5.7). They considered the school to be the only medium through which their children could learn Korean music and culture.

When I visited the school on 30 April 2016, I conducted a questionnaire among students during their lunch time. The respondents were randomly selected as all students gathered together in the hall for lunch. I received results from 49 students (24 females, 19 males, and 6 no responses) aged between eight to thirteen years old. The questionnaire consisted of five questions designed to understand listening habits and opinions on Korean music and the Korean music class of the school.<sup>156</sup> I did not give any specific definition for 'Korean music', since I wanted to avoid leading the informants into making specific responses (for instance, about traditional *gugak* or contemporary *changjak gugak*).

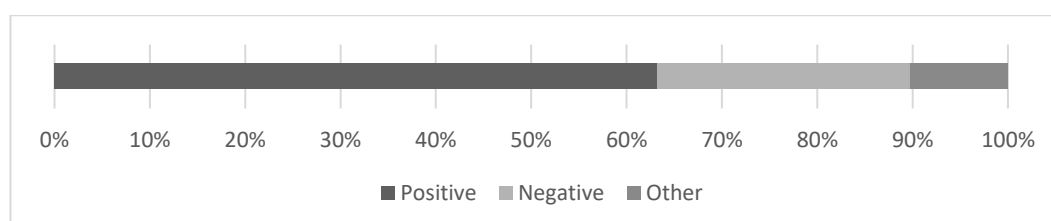
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<sup>156</sup> The questionnaire can be found in Appendix.



**Table 5.8. Children’s listening habits at the London Korean School.**

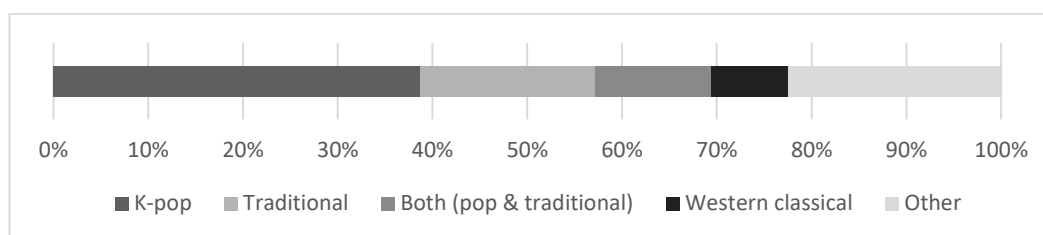
My first two questions were about listening habits when students were alone or with their family. As illustrated in Table 5.8, most responded that they usually listened to pop when alone, but to either classical or religious music when with their family. This result was the opposite to studies that suggest a family’s listening habits affect children (e.g. Brand 1986; Zdzinski 1996). In addition, and disappointingly, nobody mentioned they would listen to any Korean music other than K-pop.



**Table 5.9. Opinions on Korean music.**

When asked for their opinion on Korean music, 63 percent (31 students) gave positive responses regardless of the genre they were listening to (Table 5.9). Specifically, some commented that traditional music was unique, beautiful, and elegant. In response to the question ‘What kind of music would you use to introduce Korean culture to someone?’ almost 70 percent (38 students) chose either K-pop or traditional music (Table 5.10). Considering these results, the students seem to have a positive perception of Korean music and understand its concepts. As for traditional music, though, the school is the only place where they get direct experience of it, whereas they can enjoy K-pop every day. Thus, the LKS

plays a vital role in cultivating positive experiences and images of traditional music for students.



**Table 5.10. Music used to introduce Korea.**

Considering the curriculum and activities, staff at the school acknowledged the importance of teaching traditional music, as students were unlikely to learn about or experience Korean music and culture anywhere else. There was also an obvious benefit for the school when it came to organising festivals. However, there are three issues to consider. First, the importance of children's songs was neglected, even though many commentators stress the importance of songs in teaching language and culture (e.g. Jolly 1975; Davidson 1985; Purcell 1992). In particular, Millington asserts that children's songs are valuable pedagogical tools for teaching listening, speaking, vocabulary, sentence structure and patterning, as well as promoting culture in an enjoyable environment (2011, 135-36). Unlike playing instruments, singing does not require any specific skills or equipment, and so is accessible to all. If playing music is considered to be for special occasions, then singing children's songs is more intimately related to the everyday lives of children. This, though, indicates that both need to be part of the curriculum. Second, the school has only one member of staff able to teach traditional Korean music. This teacher told me it is a great burden to teach all the students in 12 elementary and three language-specific classes.<sup>157</sup> The school runs for only five hours each Saturday, and the allocated time is simply not enough for one teacher to teach all the students. So, students get 40 minutes of music every other week. Furthermore, if the school has an event to prepare for, that one teacher takes charge of all the music which will be performed. At the school's festival in 2016, two thirds of the programs were planned and taught solely by Choi Jeung-Hyun, who worked on it throughout the year. But Choi does not have any other choice

<sup>157</sup> There are three classes, *Urimal ban* (Korean language class), focused on learning Korean language rather than other subjects.

but to take on all the duties, unless the school is willing to hire more music teachers. This is a remote possibility, given limited budgets and the poor availability of specialist teachers.

Third, not all Korean children in the UK community study Korean music and culture, as attending a complementary school is not compulsory. Even if children do attend, not everybody studies music. There are 23 Korean complementary schools in the UK, but the LKS is the only one that teaches Korean music regularly. Other schools claim it is hard to secure a qualified teacher, even though they can receive support to obtain free traditional instruments from the South Korean government. Also, teachers can learn Korean music, including *samulnori*, through regular workshops organised in South Korea. Taken together, these are long-standing issues that cannot be solved easily. At the moment, it is more important to maintain traditional music classes at least in the LKS, as this ensures the largest number of Korean children can learn about and retain their cultural heritage. The LKS currently plays an important and unique role where North and South Korean children can together learn their common cultural heritage. This is because North Korean children began to attend the school in 2010 and have taken classes alongside their South Korean peers. Since all the materials music students encounter in class are from South Korea, this is not what would be found in North Korea. *Samulnori*, for example, is a South Korean genre developed from rural percussion bands only since 1978 (Hesselink 2006, 100). However, North Koreans would be familiar with the instruments and some of the rhythmic components, due to their pan-Korean spread. Learning and experiencing the same culture and language between North and South Korean students at the LKS is significant, since it allows the students to cultivate a shared ethnic identity from an early age, even though they live far from their parents' homeland.

## **7.2. London Korean Nationality School**

When they first settle in the UK, most North Koreans are low wage workers, because they have limited skills and English-speaking ability. They tend to work long hours compared to South Koreans in the community, and need others to take care of their children while they work. Hence, some members of the North Korean

Residents Society organised the North Korean Free Play Group, taking turns to look after children communally. Children in the group spent most of their time playing rather than learning, and the group did not operate regularly. When the Korean Nationality Residence Society (KNRS) was established in 2014, the chair of the KNRS wanted to develop the play group into a school, and eventually the London Korean Nationality School (LKNS) was founded in January 2016. The KNRS declared the aim of the school to be to nurture Korean identity through learning Korean language, culture, and history, and to cultivate global leaders who can contribute to the reunification of South and North Korea in the future.<sup>158</sup> Although the LKS is supported by the South Korean government and North Koreans can also attend, many North Koreans cannot afford its tuition fees of over £300 per student per term. Beginning in 2017, the LKS began to subsidise students from low-income families, but only a limited number of students are able to benefit. In contrast, the LKNS is free to attend, only requiring payments for snacks. The LKNS receives charitable support from Kingston Council to help with its expenses, and educational support from the Overseas Korean Foundation, but the amount is insufficient to run a school. The school rents a small space at a local church, and students attend each Saturday from 2pm to 4pm. Since its opening, an average of 30 students have attended each term. However, when I visited for the first time in 14<sup>th</sup> May 2016, there were only 15 students ranging in age from five to ten. According to Ko Seon Young, the head teacher, the attendance rate is not constant, since the school is not mandatory and many students do not attend regularly.<sup>159</sup> Thus, on weekends when the weather is good, students often miss the school to spend time with their family.

Students were divided into three groups based on their language ability, assessed through a test, seated group by group in the shared space, each class run by volunteer teachers. The teachers were parents of students or Korean students who had previous experience teaching at churches or elsewhere, but none was a

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<sup>158</sup> Kim Seho, “*Yeongguk talbuk dongpodeul, leondeon hangyeore hakgyo seolliphae* (North Korean refugees in Britain established London Korean Nationality School)”, 26 January 2016, [http://www.eknews.net/xe/?mid=journal\\_special&document\\_srl=473000](http://www.eknews.net/xe/?mid=journal_special&document_srl=473000), access 15 January 2018.

<sup>159</sup> Interview on 5 May 2016 at New Malden.

qualified teacher. Nevertheless, their presence seemed sufficient to prevent students from using English and encourage them to use Korean during the class. Since most were born in the UK, students feel more comfortable speaking in English than in Korean. During the school day, students study Korean for one hour, complete a quiz or play a game during a short break, and then do artistic activities such as colouring or origami. However, contrary to their initial objective in setting up the school, no Korean culture or history classes are run. A Sino-Korean character class was given for about three months, but could not be continued due to low level of interest from students and the teacher's schedule. The head teacher was eager to offer more varied activities, including music and exercise, yet the limited facilities do not make doing so easy.

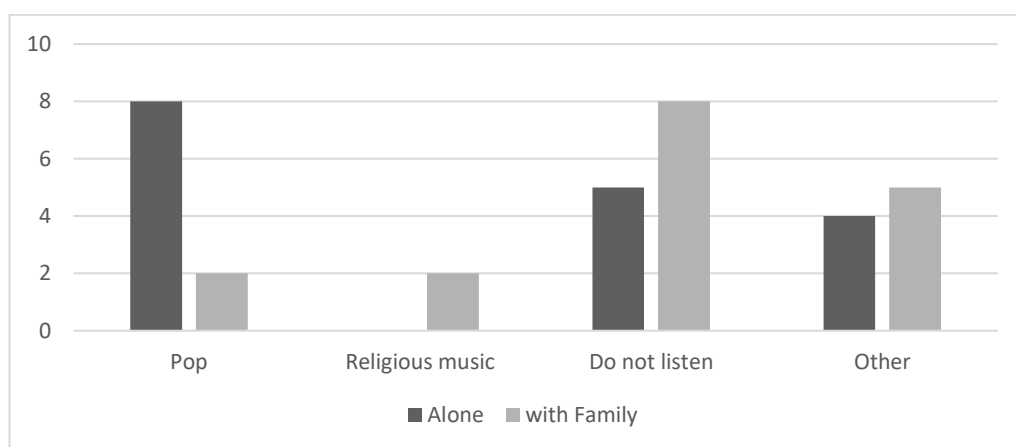


**Figure 5.13. London Korean Nationality School in 2016 (courtesy of the LKNS).**

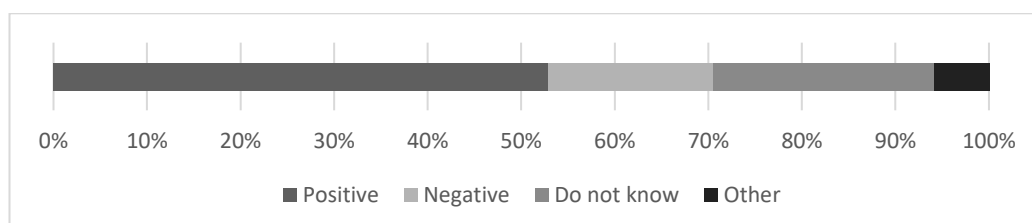
In order to understand their listening habits and musical preferences, I conducted a questionnaire with ten students in the intermediate and advanced groups. Despite insufficient numbers, I had to exclude the beginner group since they were too young to express their opinions (mostly under the age of eight). In order to increase the number of responses, I also gathered data from seven North Korean children outside the school recruited through personal connection. I combined my data results, since attendance at the school did not affect responses to the questions because the school did not offer music classes. Thus, I was able to gather results from 17 students in total (nine males and eight females) aged between eight to sixteen years old. Also, I used the same questionnaire with the

students at the LKNS as I did at the LKS, to see if there were any musical differences between South and North Korean students.

First, addressing listening habits (Table 5.11), the music these children listened to when they were alone and with their family members was different to children of South Korean heritage: most preferred to listen to pop music when alone, and didn't listen to any music or religious music with their families. I assume that listening to pop most might be due to peer pressure and easy Internet access. Four, however, replied that they enjoy classical music, animation, and children's songs.

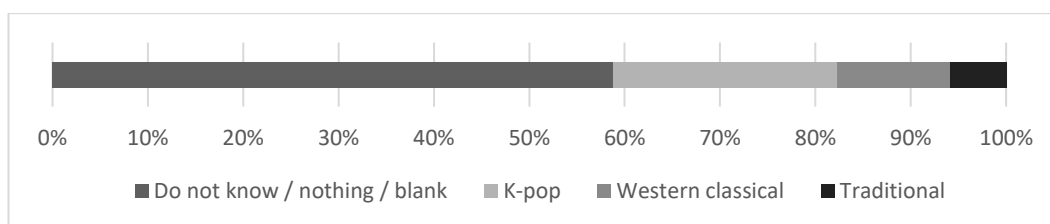


**Table 5.11. North Korean Children's Listening Habits.**



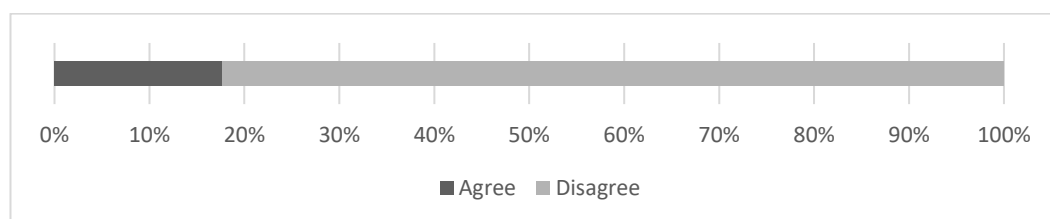
**Table 5.12. Opinions on Korean music.**

My next two questions concerned Korean music, and in the same way as at the LKS, I did not give any specific definitions for 'Korean music'. As illustrated in Table 5.12, only nine out of 17 gave positive responses. Four responded 'do not know', a different result from LKS students. Similarly, regarding my question on whether music could introduce Korea to their friends (Table 5.13), 10 out of 17 answered either 'do not know', 'nothing', or did not respond.



**Table 5.13. Music introducing Korea.**

My last question was designed to explore the need to learn Korean traditional music (Table 5.14). Only three out of 17 agreed it was necessary, giving reasons such as ‘so that I understand Korea more’ or ‘because it’s the country where I came from’. However, all others replied it was unnecessary, saying it was ‘not helpful’, ‘I don’t like Korea that much’, or that was ‘not educational’. One respondent commented, ‘I am British, so have no need to listen to them.’ In other words, the students have little knowledge or interest in Korean music.



**Table 5.14. Necessity of learning Korean music.**

My survey makes clear that North Korean children have a low level of understanding and interest in Korean music. I presume that the main reason for this is the lack of opportunity to study and experience it. As with LKS students, North Korean children are readily able to experience Western music because they are exposed to it in the UK and learning about it at school. In contrast, experiencing Korean music is more difficult. However, parents I talked with casually between 2015 and 2018 told me they hoped to teach Korean children’s songs to their children, but that this was almost impossible since most of the songs they knew included North Korean ideology, something inappropriate now they live in the UK. Because of this, parents wanted their children to learn Korean music and culture at the complementary school.

After I had conducted my questionnaire, I decided to teach children’s songs at the school for 30 minutes each week as part of a long-term observation project. I taught from May to December 2017 except for school holidays, working with 14 Korean songs. Since I have a teaching certificate, I knew what to teach



and how to prepare. I utilised notation and taught how to read it with basic knowledge about time signatures, note values, and pitch. I wrote lyrics in Korean to link to their language classes. In the first lesson, I taught ‘*Hakgyo jong*/School bell’, which is the most well-known children’s song. It was composed by Kim Mary in 1945, and all students in South Korea learn it in their first year of elementary school. It used a pentatonic scale, C-D-E-G-A, and the lyrics describe students going to school (Figure 5.14). At the end of the first class, I realised most students had memorised the song, so next I chose songs from South Korean elementary school textbooks: ‘*Annyeong*/Hello’, ‘*Sae sin*/New shoes’, and ‘*Ddokgatayo*/The Same’. These took three weeks to teach. Both songs had melodies contained within an octave, simple rhythms, and were eight bars in length. I also taught a few songs with dance movements, such as ‘*Duri saljjak*/Between two’ and ‘*Rideum akgi norae*/Song of rhythm instruments,’ to make the class more fun for the students. I was told by some parents that their children danced along with the songs every day afterwards. I taught three folksongs, ‘*Arirang*’, ‘*Gang-gang sullae*’, and ‘*Doraji*’, which are in South Korean primary school textbooks. The head teacher reported that the students sang folksongs and danced and sang ‘*Duri saljjak*’ at the 2017 year-end party.

학 교 종  
(School bell)

김메리 작사  
김메리 작곡

학 교 종 이 땡 땡 땡 어 서 모 이 자  
hak gyo jong i ddaeng ddaeng ddaeng eo seo mo i ja

선 생 님 이 우 리 를 기 다 리 신 다  
seon saeng nim i wu ri reul gi da ri sin da

**Figure 5.14. ‘*Hakgyo jong*/School bell’ score (transcribed by the author).**

On the last day (2<sup>nd</sup> December 2017), I ran my questionnaire again, with 11 students (four males, five females, and 2 no responses) aged between six and twelve years old. I changed the format to multiple choices to make it easier to answer and revised the questions to increase the focus on personal responses.

The most interesting result was that eight students chose children's songs when asked 'What kind of Korean music do you know?' They now identified these as Korean music, and their perception of Korean music was now much more positive when I asked whether they regarded it as 'exciting', 'fun', 'calm', 'gloomy', 'boring', or 'other'. I also received positive comments from parents and the other teachers. One parent commented: 'it is great to hear them sing in Korean. I had no idea what teaching Korean songs to my child would be like as I do not know any children's songs. They can also learn the Korean language through music, so it is like killing two birds with one stone'. Sadly, I could not carry on teaching at the school because I had other commitments. Unfortunately, the school could not find another volunteer music teacher so since then students have not been taught songs. Everyone who was involved while I was teaching, however, agreed that the music class was useful for students to learn not only the Korean language, but also culture through lyrics.

### **7.3. Experiences of a Korean Saturday school**

Although the LKNS is recent, the LKS has been established for more than 40 years. In fact, many of its graduates are now in their 30s and 40s. I conducted interviews with two young Korean-heritage adults to determine how experience or inexperience of the school affects the lives and identity. One, Michelle, interviewed on June 2017, came to the UK at the age of nine and attended the Barnet branch. She remembered there had been around 100 students at the time and around 10 students in a class. At the primary level, she learned language, history, and social studies. After finishing the school day, students gathered in the auditorium and learned children's songs and a few folksongs for 30 minutes. She still remembered a few of the songs she learned. She considers going to the LKS was a great help since, she could learn and understand about Korea while living abroad, could mingle with ethnic peers and continue to speak in Korean while socialising, and could learn Korean children's songs, which she hoped to teach to her own children. She grew up and became the chair of Korean Professionals in London, an organisation which aims to promote socialising between professional Koreans in their 20s and 30s. She remains a committee member. Among members, some have been living in the UK for a long time, but most arrived

recently for work. In order to manage this association, fluent Korean and an understanding of Korean culture is essential. Although they do not receive financial support from the Korean government, committee members are invited to events held by the Korean embassy as representative young Koreans, and have the chance to participate in the Future Leaders Conference held in Korea, hosted by the Overseas Korea Foundation.

Aaron, the second person I interviewed on July 2016, was born in the UK and had no Korean friends until his 20s. When he was young, he communicated in Korean with his parents, but did not have the chance to speak the language with boys of his age and had no opportunity to learn about Korea formally, as he attended the LKS only a few times. He still considers his Korean speaking level as being lower than others in his peer group. Since the 2002 World Cup, he started to mingle more with his Korean peers and learned from them about culture, including K-pop. He knows only a few Korean children's songs and folksongs. He told me he would like to teach Korean language and culture to his future children, but it would not be easy to do.

Besides these two, many of those I have talked with who went to the LKS agreed that attending it was worthwhile since it played a vital role in constructing and establishing their identity as a Korean while living overseas. Those who did not attend a complementary school tend to report that it was a shame they missed the opportunity of learning language and culture. They typically felt their Korean language ability was lower than their peers, and they lacked confidence in speaking Korean or socialising with Koreans. They also added that they struggled to establish their identity, being somewhere between British and Korean. The identity issue did not arise when they were children, but became more serious as they progressed into adulthood, when they could not avoid the first impression of being considered Asian when meeting people due to their appearance. Research on the identity of young Koreans in the US points to an identity crisis among second generation Korean Americans (D.Y. Kim 2013; P.G. Min and Chung 2014; P.G. Min and Noh 2014). However, Noh Samuel (2014, 138) asserts that ethnic attachment and feelings of ethnic pride can act as a moderator for the issue of identity. Considering the LKNS case and the experiences of second-generation

Koreans whom I have interviewed, cultural education, including learning Korean children's songs and music, helps to establish identity.

## **8. Korean Protestant Churches**

It is no secret that Korean migrant churches all over the world, mainly Protestant, play major roles as social organisations for Koreans, beyond their religious purpose as a faith-based institution (e.g. S.S. Shim 1977; P.G. Min and Kim 2005; P.G. Min 2010; S.C.H. Kim and Kim 2015). Min Pyong Gap states that Korean migrant churches long ago 'became the most important ethnic organization for Korean immigrants, which helped them to maintain social interactions and cultural traditions' (1992, 1370). The churches have proved themselves central in the Korean community and have played various roles, providing community information and support. Due to their social characteristics, those who do not consider themselves Christian in Korea tend to affiliate to Korean Protestant churches in the diaspora (S.C.H. Kim and Kim 2015, 300). Compared to the fact that less than 20 percent of South Koreans are Protestant,<sup>160</sup> the ratio of overseas Koreans attending Protestant churches is high.

Many Korean churches in the UK were founded during the 1980s, mostly around Koreatown. This date has significance in relation to the corresponding proliferation of the immigrant population during that decade. Since the 1990s, the number of short-term residents such as students studying abroad, and those working for non-Korean companies, has increased sharply, and many in the community now live scattered across London. But, many Korean churches were founded in central London for the benefit and convenience of the large numbers of Koreans resident there. All of the churches take a dual role, as a religious place of worship and as a networking hub. The number of Korean Protestant churches in London is currently estimated to be around 60,<sup>161</sup> a significant number by any

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<sup>160</sup> Statistics published by the Korean Statistical Information Service, [http://kosis.kr/statHtml/statHtml.do?orgId=101&tblId=DT\\_1PM1502&vw\\_cd=&list\\_id=&scrId=&seqNo=&lang\\_mode=ko&obj\\_var\\_id=&itm\\_id=&conn\\_path=E1](http://kosis.kr/statHtml/statHtml.do?orgId=101&tblId=DT_1PM1502&vw_cd=&list_id=&scrId=&seqNo=&lang_mode=ko&obj_var_id=&itm_id=&conn_path=E1), accessed 14 February 2020.

<sup>161</sup> Investigation based on local Korean-language newspapers and websites for Koreans in the UK, [http://www.04uk.com/bbs/board.php?bo\\_table=c1&sca=%EC%A2%85%EA%B5%90%EB%8B%A8%EC%B2%B4](http://www.04uk.com/bbs/board.php?bo_table=c1&sca=%EC%A2%85%EA%B5%90%EB%8B%A8%EC%B2%B4), and

measure, but more so when considering the small number of other religious communities: there is only one Korean Catholic church, London Hanin Cheonjugyohoe, and one Korean Buddhist temple, Youn Hwa Sa.

In this section, I examine four specific churches, two in Koreatown (London Korean Church and London Full Gospel Church) and two in central London (King's Cross Korean Church, and God's Vision Church). These were selected in consideration of three factors: location (to compare similarities and differences in practice in accordance with their location in Koreatown or central London), history (to understand the history of the UK-Korean churches), and the large congregations (churches with large congregations tend to utilise music more actively and variously). I visited each church at least twice. On my first visit, I tried to get a rough idea of each church community and service style, and only made simple notes on my phone. I observed and recorded services in detail on my second visit, and if additional information was required, I either re-visited the churches or contacted church members whom I know or who work there. I specifically explored musical aspects, based on our knowledge that music plays one of the most important roles in the process of identification within a community, and creates the cultural atmosphere and identity of a church (M. Ingalls, Landau, and Wagner 2013, 6), and hence that the type of music used can be crucial in understanding the community itself. Focusing on the types of music and musical activities in each church, I identified how they connect to ethnic identity, how and why their activities varied, and how an individual church's policies affected its musical activities and its congregation.

### **8.1. London Korean Church**

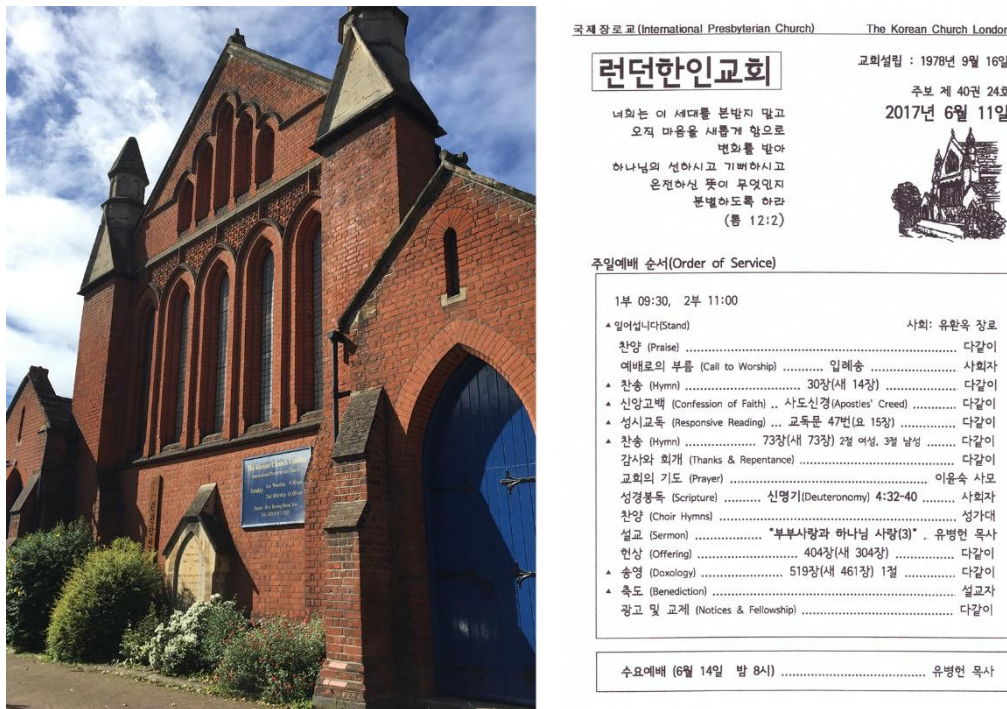
The London Korean Church (LKC) is the oldest Korean church in the UK, founded in 1978 as part of the International Presbyterian Church (IPC).<sup>162</sup> It is located in Kingston, where many Koreans live. The original members tended to be employees from Korea living in the UK on short-term contracts of typically two

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[http://eknews.net/xe/?mid=dongpo\\_christ&category=44141&page=1](http://eknews.net/xe/?mid=dongpo_christ&category=44141&page=1), accessed 14 February 2020.

<sup>162</sup> IPC was founded in 1954 through the ministry of Francis Schaeffer in Switzerland, and has several affiliated churches in Britain, Europe, and South Korea, <http://ipc.church>, accessed 16 February 2020.

to five years duration. However, many of these employees did not go back to Korea, but settled in the UK. As a result, 70 percent of the current members are first-generation immigrants. The church holds services twice on Sundays for adults, and has one additional separate service for teenagers and one for children. One adult service is held at 9.30am and the other services start concurrently at 11am.



**Figure 5.15. London Korean Church (left, photo by the author) and the weekly church newsletter (right, author's collection).**

I visited the church on 11 June 2017 and attended both services for adults and teenagers. The 9.30am service was targeted towards people who cannot participate in the main service at 11am, such as choir members and volunteers. It lasted about 50 minutes but did not include many hymns nor a choir. The main service at 11am began with singing hymns in Korean led by the choir. The atmosphere was reverential and devotional. When singing hymns, there was no accompanying instrument other than a piano. Right before the sermon, around 15 choir members sang two calm pieces of *bogeum seongga* (Korean Christian popular music). According to the curate, songs are selected by the choir conductor and change every week to match the sermon.<sup>163</sup> Hence, the choir

<sup>163</sup> Interview on 11 June 2017 at the Church.

serves to create a specific atmosphere and reflect on the contents of sermon. Almost at the end, everyone sang another hymn together as a doxology. During the service, five hymns were sung.

The teenagers' service also started at 11am, in a separate room. It began with congregational singing *bogeum seongga* in the manner of Praise and Worship, which provided a striking contrast from the adult service. They sang two songs, '*Gibbeohamyeo wangge norae bureuri*/Singing to God with joy' and '*Yeohowa hananim*/Come to my rescue' led by one singer accompanied by a band of keyboard, two guitars and drums. Like Christian teenagers in Korea, those attending prefer pop-oriented songs, as they are more familiar to them and more suited to eliciting emotion in terms of melody, beat, and lyrics than traditional hymns.

Almost the entire teenagers' service was in English, reflecting the fact that most of them present were second generation Koreans. However, songs were in both Korean and English, and the newsletter was also both in Korean and English. The curate mentioned that the use of both languages aimed to give teenagers a chance to practice Korean. Elsewhere, Min Pyong Gap points out that providing language and cultural education is common not only in Korean churches, but in Italian, Polish, and Greek churches in North America (1992, 1373). By doing so, Korean churches take on a specific function in the community, reinforcing language education.

## **8.2. London Full Gospel Church**

London Full Gospel Church (LFGC) is the biggest Korean church in the UK. It was founded in 1980 with the major aim being the revival of Protestantism in Europe. It is one of the overseas branches of Yoido Full Gospel Church (YFGC) in Seoul, which was founded in 1958 by David Yonggi Cho. The church is within the Assemblies of God of Korea (*Gidokgyo daehan hananimui seonghoe*) denomination, which stems from Pentecostalism. The YFGC is a charismatic mega-church emphasising religious experience, prayer, and evangelism, and valuing the charismatic authority of the senior pastor (Y.G. Hong 2000, 102-103). It is now known to be the largest church not only in Korea, but in the world (D.N. Clark 1986, 24; K.B. Min 2005, 590), and is recorded in the Guinness Book of

World Records as being the world's largest church, with some 700,000 members. The main UK church is located in Raynes Park, South London, but there is a branch in Finchley, North London, called the London Full Gospel Finchley Church, and an affiliated church in Fitzrovia, Central London, the London Central Church.<sup>164</sup>

Every Sunday, three services are held, at 9am, 11am and 1.30pm. All are in Korean and are for everyone, apart from young children who have their own separate service at 9am. Prior to a service, the congregation sings several pieces of *bogeum seongga* for 30 minutes, led by a band of keyboard, drums, two guitar players, and two to three singers. During the service, similarly to the London Korean Church, hymns are sung by the congregation between the sections of the service. The choir sings a piece of *bogeum seongga* after the sermon, accompanied by Western classical instruments such as piano, violin and cello. The choir conductor chooses this in advance to correspond with the topic of the sermon, and choir members rehearse prior to the service. Unlike the London Korean Church, both *bogeum seongga* and hymns are sung, although the two are bifurcated, so that *bogeum seongga* uplift emotion prior to the service and hymns calm the atmosphere during it.

One of the most distinctive features of the church is the *Dallanteu hakgyo* (Talent school). This is a part of the *juil hakgyo* (Sunday school), where children learn bible stories and do religious activities such as illustrating the stories. The aim is to make children familiar with the church and increase new members' participation in terms of proselytization. When the school began in 2008, it ran five classes in piano, ballet, guitar, art, and Korean language. The classes expanded in 2010, adding flute and Taekwondo. According to my interview with a minister,<sup>165</sup> the church values the talent school because it offers learning opportunities to children who attend, has the potential to develop talent, and

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<sup>164</sup> The main church in Korea regularly sends ministers from Korea to the LFGC and LFGFC, but not to the LCC as this is not directly connected to the LFGC, and has its own minister. However, they relate to each other as the minister of the LCC used to serve as a curate at the LFGC and belongs to the same denomination, hence the LCC appears as a related church on the LFGC website, <http://www.lfgc.co.uk>, accessed 16 September 2019.

<sup>165</sup> Email response received on 22 November 2016.



offers the opportunity for outreach. In fact, once parents become church members, their children can take the classes for free. Thus, the church regards the classes as an important part of its work and expects them to attract new people to the church. However, when I first visited in 2016, only one art class was running. The school has declined in size since 2013, and temporarily closed in 2015. It restarted in 2016, thanks to volunteers. Leaving to one side the many positive aspects it may have, a minister reported to me that the church has tremendous difficulties with funding and running the classes. I did not anticipate it would have struggled with recruiting teachers, given that there are many professional musicians and artists among its members, but the minister mentioned they were reluctant to teach when it was not directly connected to their living. The lack of volunteers was the biggest obstacle the church faced.



**Figure 5.16. *Dallanteu hakgyo* (Talent school) in 2016 (photo by the author).**

The church also organises cultural activities such as baking, traditional tea ceremony, and flower arranging. Among these, the biggest single event is a gala concert, *Gireul channeun saramdeul* (People seeking their ways) held once or twice a year. This has become one of the symbols of this church. I attended it in December 2016, when it was titled 'Winter Sonata' and was held at the Finchley branch, although all performers were members of the main church in Raynes Park. Five musicians performed: a pianist, a soprano, a violinist, a guitarist, and a *gayageum* player. The programme included pieces intended to demonstrate the

diversity of expertise, from solos or duos to ensembles. Each performer played at least two solos, one of which demonstrated their instrument or voice and the other being a popular piece of Christian Contemporary Music. When the soprano sang, she welled up with emotion, stopping the performance for a moment to compose herself, which caused many of the audience members to do the same. After she ended, I heard some of the audience remark that the concert was filled with the Holy Spirit. One performance was by the duo KAYA, encountered earlier in this thesis. While it is common for Western classical musicians to play hymns, KAYA is the only group in the UK who play this sacred repertoire using a traditional Korean instrument. Its *gayageum* player came to the UK in 2003 to study theology, and since its guitarist arrived in 2005, the duo has actively done missionary work together through Christian music. By 2019, KAYA had released two albums, one including hymns. They play hymns like ‘Amazing Grace’, but also compose pieces themselves, such as ‘Thy Faithfulness’ and ‘Heart for the People’. They perform at various churches, not only the church they worship at.



**Figure 5.17. *Gireul channeun saramdeul* (People seeking their ways) concert in 2016 (photo by the author).**

Many North Korean refugees are also affiliated with churches, for much the same reasons as South Koreans. Typically, they first learn about Christianity on their arrival in China, immediately after escaping North Korea, and continue their new-found religion in the UK. Churches are significant places where they find relief from turmoil and can receive vital information in their native language about

accommodation, utilities/services, education, and so on. Once North Koreans began to arrive in the UK in 2004, the LFGC directed outreach work toward them, listing this as one of its eight goals. As a result, it has become the main church for North Koreans in London. Existing members help new arrivals settle in the country and give them a sense of belonging in an unfamiliar place. Some refugees actively participate in church activities, joining the choir or playing instruments for services. By attending church, they have opportunities not only to receive help but also to mingle with South Koreans where, as members of the same congregation, they can feel a sense of fellowship.

### **8.3. King's Cross Korean Church**

King's Cross Korean Church (KCKC) is one of the oldest Korean churches in central London. It is International Presbyterian by denomination. Founded in December 1980, it rented the German Mission and Methodist Church building near King's Cross station, from which the church's name originates. In fact, it is common for Korean churches to hire an existing church building for a few hours for their services, as few have sufficient finance to buy or build a building. This means that changing the worship location is common for many, and the KCKC has moved seven times since its foundation. It currently hires St. Peter's Church in Notting Hill. As is common with other Korean churches, it hands out a weekly newsletter (see Figure 5.18) at the entrance, which includes the order of service, announcements, worship schedules, names of volunteers participating in the service, and attendance data from the previous week.<sup>166</sup> This church is larger than most others in London, with around 200 attendees, many of them have a role in the church as deacons, elders, choir members or volunteers.

The KCKC has both Hosanna Choir and Gloria Music Team. The former consists of 15 people, including a conductor and piano accompanist, and normally sings two pieces of *bogeum seongga* at the beginning of the service, hymns between each section, and one CCM piece before the sermon. On the day I visited,

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<sup>166</sup> Unlike British Churches, most Korean churches tend to check the attendance of the members. All members are required to join a group, depending on age, and the leader of a group checks attendance. This is a way to encourage attendance and increase the sense of closeness between members.

22 April 2018, they sang two well-known pieces of *bogeum seongga*, 'Juneun jeo san wi-ui baekhap/God is a lily on the mountain' and 'Ju-ui nopeusin ireum chanyang/Praise the highest name, God'. The choir sang hymns accompanied by an organ. It is generally unusual to have an organ in a service due to the limited number of Korean organists in London. However, the KCKC fortunately have an organist who came to London on a Youth Mobility Scheme visa, and plays at the church every fourth Sunday. The music team has 16 members including leaders, instrumentalists and vocalists. No band instruments were played on 22 April, though, and the band leader told me the church utilises music in different ways each week: the band plays rock-based music on the first and third Sunday of the month, but only piano and guitars play on the second Sunday, and an organ provides the support for hymns on the fourth Sunday.<sup>167</sup> According to both the minister and the band leader, the different genres of music create contrasting atmospheres for each Sunday, and better serve people's tastes.

**교회성립일** : 1980년 12월 21일      2018년 4월 22일 / 제 38권 16호

**에수님의 생으로 세상의 빛이 되는 교회!**

**King's Cross Korean Church**  
www.kingscrosschurch.com  
Kensington Park Road, Nottingham, London W11 2PN  
Email: kckc@kckc.org

**주일예배**  
The Service on the Lord's Day

오후 2시 / St. Peter's Church      인도: 박상건 목사

● 예배 선언 (Call to Worship)      인도자

● 찬양 (Doxology)      호산나 찬양대

● 기원 (Invocation)      인도자

● 회개와 기도 (Repentance)      인도자

● 신약 고백 (Confession of Faith)      사도신경(The Apostles' Creed)      다함께

경배와 찬양 (Praise and Worship)      글로리아 찬양팀

기도 (Prayer)      원보영 원사

성경봉독 (Scripture Reading)      사도행전 11장25-26절      김미향 집사

특별찬양 (Special Praise)      평화, 하나님의 영광이      수련회 2조

● 봉헌 (Offering)      다함께

교회 소식 (Church News)      인도자

찬양 Anthem      호산나 찬양대

설교 (Sermon)      그리스도인이란 불린 사람들      서정은 목사

● 찬양 (Singing Hymn)      나의 영원하신 기업(435장)      다함께

● 축도 (Benediction)      서정은 목사

● 송영 (Doxology)      호산나 찬양대

● 스크린강독      ● 찬양: 김미향, 안효성      ● 찬양: 안효성

**수요일예배**  
The Service on Wednesday

오후 7시 / St. Mary's Church      인도: 박상건 목사

경배와 찬양      다함께

말씀      히브리서 강해      박상건 목사

기도      다함께

**주일예배안내**  
성인: 오후 2:00~3:10      중·고등부: 오후 2:00~3:10  
유치부: 오후 2:00~3:10      청년 1부 모임: 오후 4:00~5:10  
초등부: 오후 2:00~3:10      청년 2부 모임: 오후 4:00~5:10

**기도회안내**  
수요기도회: 오후 7:00~8:00

**다락방모임**  
매주-금요일: 오후 7:30~10:00

**예배장소안내**  
\* 주일예배: 주일 오후 2시  
St. Peter's Church  
Kensington Park Road,  
Nottingham, London  
W11 2PN  
\* 수요일예배: 수요일 오후 7시30분  
St. Mary's church,  
2 Edith Road,  
West Kensington, London  
W14 9BA

**출석통계**

주일예배(성도+유아)	152.6
중·고등부(학생+교사)	5.2
초등부(학생+교사)	20.4
유치부(학생+교사)	11.3
영아부(유아+부모)	
<b>계</b>	<b>203</b>
정년부	48
수요기도회	16

**헌금통계**

주일헌금	영아부	
실일조	유치부	
감사헌금	초등부	
구제 장학	중고등부	
전도 선교	기타	
건축	<b>합계</b>	

**예배 봉사위원**

일자	기도	성경읽기	통역	티당번	특별순서
04월 22일	원보영	김미향	김유리	양선 다락방	수련회 2조
04월 29일	조효수	김명미	나채국	오래참음	김은숙
05월 06일	강영숙	이윤수	이샘	충성 다락방	어린이주일
05월 13일	김진희	박영숙	이성효		어버이주일

**4월 봉사위원**

안내위원	윤규학 김민태	헌금위원	권옥경 신재은
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Figure 5.18. Weekly newsletter of King's Cross Korean Church (author's collection).

There are several videos on YouTube played by church members.<sup>168</sup> In fact, a large number of professional musicians and music students attend the church,

<sup>167</sup> Email correspondence, 19 May 2018.

<sup>168</sup> For instance, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fhvsGLennQ>, accessed 27

and sometimes they perform a special piece during the service. The church records these and uploads them on YouTube to promote the church and attract new members. Contrary to my expectation that music may be the reason why professionals and music students attend, those I talked with mentioned that the most important reason was the location: many live and work in central London rather than to London's southwest in Raynes Park and Kingston borough, so this church is more accessible for them. Another reason that was given, though, is that the church supports music, and it is certainly true that music makes up a big part of a service. Apart from the reasons for attending, those I talked with pointed out that socialising with other Korean musicians was also an advantage of attending the KCKC. As migrant musicians, they form sympathetic bonds, share information, and support each other.

#### **8.4. God's Vision Church**

God's Vision Church (GVC) is known to have the largest congregation of Korean churches in central London. Being part of the General Assembly of Presbyterian Churches in Korea, it was founded in 1985 in Wimbledon, South London, and opened a second branch in 2006 in central London. In 2008, the two branches combined to become one central congregation. Although GVC does not own its building, it holds services every Wednesday and Sunday by hiring the Welsh Baptist Church near Oxford Circus. Due to its central location, most members are short-term residents such as university students and workers, and the average age is younger than in other Korean churches. The location and the make-up of the congregation are factors that distinguish it from other Korean churches, particularly those in Koreatown, where most of the congregations are long-term residents.

I participated in a service on 27 November 2016. The utilisation of music was more or less similar to that of the LFGC. The service began with singing *bogeum seongga* led by a band. According to the minister, band members meet every Saturday to select and rehearse songs, preparing around five each week.<sup>169</sup> While they normally sing hymns with Korean lyrics, on the last Sunday of each

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June 2018.

<sup>169</sup> Email correspondence, 8 June 2017.



month they sing in English for the sake of English speakers. When singing in Korean, they provide English lyrics on a screen so that non-Korean speakers are able to follow along.



**Figure 5.19. Service of God's Vision Church (God's Vision Church's website).<sup>170</sup>**

In common with the LFGC, both hymn and *bogeum seongga* are sung at designated points in the order of service. There is also the choir singing section after the sermon. The choir members meet every Saturday to rehearse, and their conductor chooses the song, usually a rather calm CCM piece accompanied by piano. Sometimes the choir singing will be replaced with a special instrumental performance of a Christian song, taking advantage of the many Korean students studying Western classical music who are church members. However, the GVC does not have a regular music group, and maintaining one when most of the congregation are short-term residents would be challenging. The most striking part of the GVC is that its members participate in outreach by singing Christian songs in public. A group from the GVC performs in Leicester Square every Saturday between 10.30am and 12.30pm, accompanied by a guitar, with some spiritual dance. They sing in English, since their aim is to reach anyone and everyone. While some sing, one or two hand out church flyers. In fact, this sort of

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<sup>170</sup> <http://godsvisionchurch.org>, accessed 8 April 2020.

activity is common in South Korea, where churches characteristically show great zeal in their evangelism (K.B. Min 2005, 109).

### **8.5. Features of Korean churches in the UK**

Min Pyong Gap (1992, 1372-74) divides the features of Korean immigrant churches in New York into four social functions: fellowship, maintenance of ethnic identity and ethnic subculture, social service, and social status or position. The Korean churches in London fulfil these same roles, which is the reason why such a large number of the Korean community go to them. However, they also have different functions. For Koreans in London, practical elements such as the distance of the church from their home, their relationships with church members, the minister and the sermon, and the church atmosphere, all influence their choice of church more than its denomination. In much the same vein, Clark describes Korean churches as being 'congregational rather than denominational' (1986, 22). In general, most members of churches in the Korean community area between Kingston and Raynes Park are immigrant settlers, and vary in age from children to the elderly, whereas churches in central London attract mostly young short-term residents such as students studying abroad or young professionals working and living in central London. This difference in membership affects the delivery of worship and the use of music.

The four Korean churches discussed here share several aspects in their use of music. All actively utilise music, believing it can enrich and advance theology (Begbie 2000, 3). A service always begins with singing, putting people in the appropriate 'emotional' state of mind, and allowing them to contemplate the service to come (Viladesau 2000, 48). Hymns are sung by all members to punctuate the order of service, which maintains a solemn atmosphere and connects the different parts of worship, as Ward (2005, 198) points out. Congregational singing provides a 'spiritual dimension' for its members (Boyce-Tillman 2001, 155). Furthermore, choirs set the devotional mood either before or after the sermon. The churches also use music differently. The LKC uses different types of music for services for adults and teenagers. The KCKC offers services with different types of music each week, ranging from classical to rock-based Christian music, appealing to congregational tastes (Wagner 2013, 111).

*Gireul channeun saramdeul* (People seeking their ways), the concert regularly organised by the LFGC, can be compared to the music of Hillsong, a branch of which operates in London's Tottenham Court Road; just as Hillsong uses music to market itself (ibid.), the LFGC uses music to 'brand' its church. The GVC is dedicated to outreach, and more aggressively sings in public. Through singing, its members create a sacred space and create interest in their religious pursuits wherever they are, even outside their church. This is similar to evangelical groups in the US (M. Ingalls 2011, 259).

One interesting finding of my research is that although the LKC and GVC share the same denomination, their music practice is completely different. GVC services actively utilise Christian popular music and dance, whereas LKC services offer a minimal amount of music using traditional hymns more than contemporary music. In fact, the differences in music can largely be attributed to the ministers, rather than the denomination. Yu Chai-Shin (1996, 187) points out that ministers in Korean churches are highly respected leaders with absolute authority. This derives from Korean Confucian principles of hierarchy, authority and orthodoxy (D.N. Clark 1986, 22), so the musical and cultural activities of any given church reflect the material the minister regards as appropriate. This became evident in my interviews with four ministers: whereas ministers of the LFGC, KCKC and GVC all set a premium on the role of music in their church, the minister of the LKC considered music to have only a minor role in worship.

## **9. Chinese and Japanese musical activities**

### **9.1. Chinese musical activities**

Due to the large population, there are several Chinese community centres in London, including in Camden, Lambeth and Haringey. Of all these centres, I particularly focused on the Chinese Community Centre (CCC) in Chinatown, since this has the longest history of any of the venues, and it is the primary place where Chinese musical activities are conducted. The CCC opened in Chinatown in 1979, sponsored by the LCCA. It aims to cater to the community, empowering its members and focusing on preserving Chinese culture, arts and identity. The centre is located in the heart of Chinatown, on the third floor of a Chinese-run casino. In fact, the casino absorbs the cost of the venue for the centre. The CCC is



operated by 13 staff and management committee members, who run two clubs and 14 classes on a regular basis, all instructors being hired and paid for by the centre. To join classes, one has first to become a member. This costs £12 (£8 for a child) annually. According to one staff member, there were around 700 members in 2018.



**Figure 5.20. Promotional poster of the Chinese music class at the Chinese Community Centre in 2018 (author's collection).**

The centre runs two music classes, for Cantonese opera singing and Chinese music. The former opened recently and runs every Friday from 1:30pm, charging £15 per session. The music class has been running since 1992, and takes place twice every Saturday from 12pm to 2pm for beginners and 2pm to 4pm for advanced students, charging £80 for 10 lessons. When I visited on 8 December 2018, around 17 students were learning *erhu* (two-stringed Chinese fiddle), *guzheng* (zither, using the modern 21-stringed version), *dizi* (horizontal bamboo flute), and *pipa* (four-stringed lute). The instructor, Titus Mak, was 71 years old

in 2018, and had moved to Britain from Hong Kong in 1980.<sup>171</sup> He used to teach young people at after-school clubs in Hong Kong, and by 2018 had been teaching at the centre for 26 years. According to him, the instruments used by classes belong to the centre, and a total of 30 students attend each class (including one British and one Japanese student). He teaches a collection of instruments. The students were playing different pieces written in *jianpu*, cipher notation, when I visited. It was not a group lesson, but rather a collection of separate lessons, although all were rehearsing in one hall. While they practised by themselves, Mak walked around and taught each individually. He mentioned how he had often performed back in the day, though as he gets older he just focuses on teaching. He noted that his goal is to promote Chinese music in Britain.



**Figure 5.21. The Chinese music class at the Chinese Community Centre in 2018 (photo by the author).**

Besides the music classes at the CCC, various Chinese musical activities are held across London. One association, the UK Chinese Ensemble (UKCE), formed in 1998, has actively performed traditional instruments worldwide. As of 2019, it had 24 musicians, with three groups under its umbrella. The Silk and Bamboo Ensemble (Figure 5.22) was first established at the same time as the UKCE and consists of professional musicians who present typical music featuring three to eight instruments. Its repertoire depends on musicians' availability. The Silk String Quartet (Figure 5.23) was established in 2007 by four professional Chinese musicians – Cheng Yu, Sun Zhuo, Wang Xiao, and Zhou Jinyan – but its members

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<sup>171</sup> Interview with Titus Mak on 8th December 2018.

may vary at any given time due to availability; the members working with it in 2018 were Cheng Yu on *pipa* (four-stringed lute), Chen Teng on *erhu* (two-stringed fiddle), Qiao Zhimin on *guzheng* (21-stringed zither), and Reylon Yount on *yangqin* (hammered dulcimer). The quartet plays not only traditional pieces but also new music, sometimes in collaboration with musicians from other cultures. Members receive payment for each concert, but are only paid expenses for charitable work. Fees, however, are not enough for performers to earn a living through them, so musicians must have other music-related jobs such as teaching or research.



**Figure 5.22. The Silk and Bamboo Ensemble (UK Chinese Ensemble website).**



**Figure 5.23. The Silk String Quartet (UK Chinese Ensemble website).**

These two groups are professional, whereas the third, the London Youlan Qin Society, is open to anyone who wants to learn the *qin* (*guqin*: seven-stringed zither), with a membership fee of £30 per year. Some of its members are amateur, and some consider themselves to be more expert. The society was established in 2003 and has organised an annual concert and a *guqin* summer school since 2014 at China Exchange. The society is able to afford to use this venue by splitting the costs and profits 50/50 between the society and the venue. The UK Guzheng Centre was established in 2000 by one UKCE member, Zhu Xiao Meng, and is currently located near Euston Square. According to its 2016 information leaflet, the age of students varies from five to 80, and by 2016, 150 students had attended. The centre organises group lessons as well as private tuition for anyone interested in the *guzheng*, and has held five *guzheng* examinations so far. It organises a termly concert at which students show their skills to families and friends. I went to a concert in 2016 and found that all the performers were under 20. Although rather small and informal, the concert seemed to be a good and enjoyable experience for all of those involved, since I witnessed that families and friends of performers were busy with taking photos or videos of the performers, and gave them a round of applause for each performance. The centre also organised a trip to Shanghai to work with the Shanghai Guzheng Association back in 2010, and by doing so it played a role as a bridge between the *guzheng* at home and abroad.

## **9.2. Japanese musical activities**

Japanese musical activities have been run in a completely different way from those of the Chinese or Korean diasporas. The activities split into traditional Japanese music (or music played with Japanese traditional instruments) and Western classical music. The traditional music activities in London began in the 1980s with *taiko*. The *taiko* drum, and its role within an ensemble of the same name, is recognised as one of the most popular Japanese instruments around the world, and Britain proved to be no exception to this. The *taiko* player Joji Hirota founded the Japanese-only group 'Joji Hirota & London Taiko Drummers' in the 1980s, and has since organised workshops across Britain. He later organised the multinational *taiko* group 'Thames Daiko,' with the support of the Japanese



Embassy in the UK.<sup>172</sup> Not only Hirota, but also many others have since organised *taiko* group and have provided workshops across Britain: there are now over 20 taiko groups in the UK.



**Figure 5.24. The London Gagaku Orchestra performing at SOAS, London, in 1989 (courtesy of Adrian Freedman).**

Besides *taiko*, other traditional musical activities have also been organised in London. A Japanese court music ensemble called the London Gagaku Orchestra (a.k.a. Tortoises in Heaven) was founded in 1985, with the members being Clive Bell (ryuteki), Claire Placito (ryuteki), Adrian Freedman (hichiriki), Dean Brodrick (hichiriki), Andrew Okrzeja (sho), Hugh Nankivell (sho), Adrian Lee (koto), Melissa Holding (koto), Stuart Lee (biwa), Jackie Brooks (shoko) and Glen Fox (kakko) (Figure 5.24). They studied music, but interestingly, none of them were Japanese and had formally trained in Japanese music when the ensemble

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<sup>172</sup> <https://japanmatsuri.com/joji-hirota-london-taiko-drummers>, last accessed 12 November 2020.

was organised (Bell, Freedman and Holding later did, though).<sup>173</sup> They simply had a great deal of interest in the music. Many of them were students at City University, but they held some rehearsals at SOAS, particularly in a later incarnation when the orchestra reformed. They bought some instruments from Ray Man, a shop specialising in Japanese instruments then in Camden Town, but used some Chinese equivalents to Japanese instruments, and made some instruments themselves such as *daiko* (big drum) or *shoko* (small drum) using other similar instruments. Hugh Nankivell moving to Newcastle when he graduated from City University in 1987, a year after they gave their first concert in 1986; in a reformed line-up, the orchestra continued to give additional concerts until around 1989. Freedman, Holding and Bell have continued teaching and performing, and work with a number of additional musicians in various ensembles.



**Figure 5.25. Members of London Okinawa Sanshinkai (courtesy of David Hughes)**

In 1997, Japanese music specialist David Hughes and the Okinawan music specialist Robin Thompson started an Okinawa ensemble, now known as London Okinawa Sanshinkai. The ensemble meets every Saturday at SOAS to practice for three hours. When the group was first established, the ratio of Japanese and non-Japanese members was 50/50.<sup>174</sup> However, the number of Japanese has since increased, and now around 80 percent of members are Japanese who either

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<sup>173</sup> Online interview with Adrian Freedman on 28 April 2021.

<sup>174</sup> Interview with David Hughes at SOAS on 4 July 2018.

moved to or were born in Britain and who joined the ensemble to find a way to appreciate their motherland culture in their new homeland. Ironically, the leaders and teachers of the group are non-Japanese. In other words, Japanese immigrants learn Japanese music from non-Japanese. However, the members trust and respect their leaders' musical ability as professional musicians, and follow their direction without challenging. If it had been otherwise, the group would not have lasted more than 20 years. The group has been invited to perform at a variety of Asian related events across the UK, and in Okinawa as well. According to David Hughes, the members' skills are now almost professional, even though none of the members are professional musicians. David Hughes also organised a Japanese Minyo (folksong) Group at SOAS, around three quarters of the group being non-Japanese. This group also has a rehearsal once a week at SOAS, and is very active in performing at Japanese events including Japan Matsuri. Western classical music activities are also run in the Japanese community in London, represented specifically by two choirs. One is the Green Chorus Japanese Women's Choir,<sup>175</sup> which is the best-known group and is the oldest Japanese female choir. It was first established in the 1980s under the auspices of the Nippon Club. It is for Japanese only, and everything is done in Japanese. Since most of the members are wives of Japanese businessmen and have children, they have more time during weekdays. Thus, members rehearse every Monday morning for two hours at Trinity Church in Golders Green. Although the choir itself has in a Western form, the group sings Japanese songs arranged to fit the choir as well as Western classical music. The choir presents concerts at various venues, including churches and the Japanese Embassy, and has regularly participated in cultural events such as Japan Matsuri.

The second choir, the UK-Japan Music Society, is worthy of note.<sup>176</sup> It was founded in 1992 by a British musician, Jonathan Gregory, in response to a request from the Embassy of Japan who hoped to set up a longer-term cultural interaction

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<sup>175</sup> The Green Chorus website, [https://www.facebook.com/GreenChorusLondon/about/?ref=page\\_internal&path=%2FGreenChorusLondon%2Fabout%2F](https://www.facebook.com/GreenChorusLondon/about/?ref=page_internal&path=%2FGreenChorusLondon%2Fabout%2F), last accessed 25 January 2021.

<sup>176</sup> UK-Japan Music Society website (<https://www.ukjapanmusicsociety.org>), last accessed 25 January 2021.

group after the Japan Festival 1991.<sup>177</sup> The group recruit members through Japanese newspapers circulated in London and Cambridge, as well as through word of mouth. Currently there are 30 members, and the ratio between Japanese and non-Japanese is 50/50 (Figure 5.26). Japanese members are business people and their families, students in universities, and normal residents. UK members are often the founder's choir members, JETAA members (ex-Japan Exchange and Teaching Programme participants), those who studied or lived in Japan, and those who are interested in Japanese culture. Since most of the members work on weekdays, they rehearse in the evenings and at weekends. The society has been very active and holds three regular concerts a year. Jonathan Gregory leads the society and organises performances, as a Cathedral organist himself. The society has been contributing to the promotion of friendship and mutual understanding between Japanese and British people through music, in accordance with the aim of the society. According to the director of the society, Yoshimi Gregory, she has been told several times by British audience members attending the society's concerts that they are moved by their music. Also, Japanese members who returned to Japan often told her that participating in the society was their best experience in the UK, since it broadened their perception and helped them understand the country, as they worked alongside British members in the society. Indeed, the society provides a unique opportunity to its community members as well as to local British people.

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<sup>177</sup> Email correspondence with the director Yoshimi Gregory on 13 April 2021.





**Figure 5.26. Members of the UK-Japan Music Society (courtesy of the UK-Japan Music Society)**

## **10. Discussion**

The Korean diaspora in London offers various music activities, held in community centres, schools and churches centred around the Raynes Park, New Malden, and Kingston areas. Arirang Gayageum Ensemble, Youn Hwa Sa Samulnori Team, and the *janggu* and *minyo* group show how traditional music is utilised as community activity. Due to the similarity of traditional music between the two Koreas, North and South Koreans in the community are able to enjoy traditional folksongs together. However, there are two limitations on the activities; one is that groups are unable to survive without instructors and leaders. As the case of the Youn Hwa Sa Samulnori Team shows, if the leader cannot continue her activity, the team will disband, as it is almost impossible for amateurs to keep their activities going without the assistance of professional musicians. The second limitation is that all groups are made up of senior community members in their 50s or older. The younger generation is rather less likely to participate in activities as they are busy working. Thus, there is a possibility that these cultural activities and exchanges among people from the two Korea might end with the current generation. However, community members have been trying to pass down their cultural heritage to the younger generation through cultural education at the Korean language schools. Not only at these schools, but also young Koreans

naturally learn Korean culture by socialising with their ethnic peers in Korean churches. Much as with Korean churches in other countries, churches play vital roles not only in religion but also as social spaces for the British Korean community.

The longest-running musical activity in the Korean community is the choir, although its operatives continue to change. Members of choirs socialise through the activities, expressing their diverse identities such as culture, religion, and immigrant experiences through singing. Members of the Korean Artists Association UK have presented their complex identity as Koreans living in London through professional art activities. This association activity provides immigrant artists a sense of belonging, and can be a driving force behind steady work. Not only South Koreans, but North Koreans express their identity through music. Specifically, the Arirang Yesuldan showcases North Korean music and dance, which is not otherwise easily accessible, to local people as well as South Koreans living in London. This offers people with an opportunity to experience and understand unfamiliar North Korean culture.

The Chinese and Japanese diaspora in London also run various cultural activities. Given the sheer size and the number of both professional and amateur musicians, I was unable to observe all activities of the Chinese community in my research, but it is clear that they have established and maintain the largest and widest selection among the three East Asian diasporas. The Japanese do not have as many activities as the Chinese, but they have more groups mixing with locals than groups with only Japanese. This provides a good opportunity for members in the diaspora to blend with the local mainstream population while ensuring they do not feel isolated in a foreign land. My investigation confirms David Hesmondhalgh's comment that 'music provides opportunities for the forging of new friendships and the reaffirmation of old ones' (Hesmondhalgh 2013, 102). Also, my observation of activities in the three diasporas makes it evident that sharing music from the homeland can enhance a diasporic community's attachment, since – and in this I am paraphrasing and repurposing a comment by Peter Martin – music connects people emotionally and promotes collective membership (after Martin 2006, 221).

Compared to the festivals and events I discussed in Chapter 4, regular music activities run in the three diasporas involve a diverse range of genres, from traditional, Western classical, and children's songs, to religious music. This chapter has illustrated how members of a diaspora tend to participate in music activities according to their individual interests, affiliations, or religion, and it is this which creates Slobin's *subculture* in the diaspora. While diaspora communities promote their own unique cultures in festivals and events that utilise the *superculture* (after Slobin's term), they create opportunities to boost a diversity of cultures in the community and strengthen their relationships with each other through various activities within the *subculture*. Thus, it becomes apparent that the *superculture* and *subculture* play distinct roles in the diaspora itself.

## CHAPTER 6

### Musical portraits

Music provides a basis for not only collective identity but also self-identity, since it is intrinsically linked to the private self (Hesmondhalgh 2013, 1-2), and music making depends upon an individuals' experiences and attitudes towards a particular music (Blacking 1995, 160). Even listening to music in everyday life indicates people's association with it (Frith 2003, 93). In the same way that individuals come together to form a society, individual participation in musical activities creates a culture within a community. Hence, it is essential to investigate the activities of individuals to understand the music of a community.

The individuals who participate in musical activities can largely be classified as professionals or amateurs. However, it is hard to draw an explicit line that separates the two. A simple definition can be professionals are paid and amateurs are not. But, if so, how can we define those who receive professional music education and play music, but have part-time jobs in other fields to make ends meet? – it is hard to make a living by music alone. It is equally difficult to categorise those who play in amateur orchestras after retiring from professional orchestras, or famous pop musicians who study music themselves after beginning their careers playing in local pubs. Finnegan points out that the self-evaluation of musicians outweighs the economic status often defined as 'professional' (2007, 12-18). However, this is limited to local musicians, and cannot be applied to all. Cottrell (2004, 11), appropriately, describes professional musicians by drawing on the concept of work, not merely for economic necessity but also for self-identification. In this thesis, I consider Korean professional musicians those who mainly work in any field of music (performing, teaching and creating), and amateurs who have a main job other than music but participate in music-making as a leisure activity.

Korean professional musicians in London can be divided into three in accordance with the genre or style they work with: traditional Korean music, Western art music, or pop. Here, I report on four traditional musicians, three individuals and one group of (government) Western art musicians, and two pop

artists.<sup>178</sup> Note, though, that music is not just for specific people but for all. Everyone is deeply linked with music, listening to or participating in it, and music has a significant role for individuals in understanding who they are (Frith 2002, 46). However, the emotional effect of music differs from person to person: for some it is a vehicle which brings a person into another mental space, to others it is a way to foster a sense of inner calm (DeNora 2000, 14-16). Observing the music-making of individuals is pivotal in understanding the culture of a community or society. In this chapter, I observe individuals who actively participate in music-making in their everyday lives, not as professional musicians but as amateurs. Why and how do they take part in music? What influence does music have on their lives? What does music mean to them? Through answering these questions, I look into how music is utilised in constructing identity within a diasporic community. I focus more on music and the diasporic experiences of individual musicians, since music constitutes a significant means of expression in the lives of those in a diaspora (Slobin 1994, 243-44). My case studies are taken from a broader survey, combined with in-depth interviews of individuals within the community.

## **1. Professional musicians**

### **1.1. Traditional Korean musicians**

#### **1.1.1. Jung Ji-eun and KAYA**

Jung started to learn the *gayageum* (Korean zither) at the age of 17 and received her BA in Korean traditional music from Ewha Woman's University in Seoul. At that time, it was quite rare for a traditional musician to go abroad to pursue a career in music – the few who had preceded her by coming to the UK included Paek Inok and Jang Yeonok. She arrived in London in 2003 to study Christian theology and do Christian outreach work with the *gayageum*. Once settled in London, she had various opportunities in which she could perform as a traditional musician, so encouraged her husband, Jeon Sung-min, to join her in London, where he settled in 2005.

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<sup>178</sup> I interviewed five Korean Western classical musicians in total, but include only three considering gender balance and relevance.

Jung told me in interview on 24 February 2017 that they had formed a duo named KAYA with *gayageum* and guitar in 2002 in Korea. They had formerly played in the church both attended, but broadened their stage after settling in London. They became the most sought-after Korean musicians at private and public venues. They also tried busking, including in central London, to promote Korean music and communicate with people. In the interview, Jung recalled her early experience:

We were beginning to settle down in this country, but our income was unstable. Although we could not earn much, we saved money living frugally, because we wanted to buy a car. We hoped to play music all around the UK, and a car was indispensable for carrying the *gayageum*. Our aim was to introduce traditional Korean music here, as well as doing Christian outreach work. We finally bought a small second-hand car and performed at venues which included churches all over the UK. We also did outdoor busking in central London. Of course, most people were curious as they had never seen the instrument or heard its sound. Although it was not the kind of work which makes a lot of money, it was fun and provided unforgettable experiences.

As diasporic musicians, Jung and Jeon want to be a bridge between different cultures by demonstrating harmony between East and West through combining the *gayageum*, an Asian instrument, and the Western guitar. They took into account that people were not familiar with Korean music when they presented concerts, thus, tried to make music in the most accessible way. Jung mentioned how:

As a Korean traditional musician playing in a country far from the music's origin, I considered I should approach the audience in the way that they could make them feel comfortable, so that they would not feel any resistance to experiencing the unfamiliar. Playing the *gayageum* along with guitar was one of the ways we chose, pursuing music that was not difficult but 'easy listening' and comfortable for everyone.

One of their aims was to communicate with a range of people in the UK. Thus, Jung composed her very first piece, 'Heart for the People,' concerning North

Koreans specifically and more people who suffer in the world in general. They wanted to comfort people through music and hoped to make audiences empathetic to them. Another aim was, as Christians, to show their faith to those who suffer. They have performed at many churches as well as actively participating in their own church. One of their albums, *Bridge*, exclusively contains pieces praising God, including arrangements of hymns such as 'Thy Faithfulness' and 'Amazing Grace' for the 25-stringed *gayageum*.

KAYA have released two albums, *Korean Breeze* and *Bridge*. The former has one traditional piece (*sanjo*) and six of Jung's own compositions. She composed 'Market Day', 'People of the Sea', and 'The Field' inspired by photos taken by her father, and describes Korean scenery through the *gayageum*. 'Heart for the People' is a piece about suffering, and 'The Narrow Way' expresses her inner turmoil. Jung rearranged the last piece on the album, 'New Arirang', in a modern style trying to harmonise East and West by playing Korean and Western instruments together, utilising a Korean folksong melody and Western musical expressions. In the album, she takes the central role, while Jeon participates as producer and guest performer.

The second album, *Bridge*, has eight pieces and is played and produced by both Jung and Jeon. The two of them rearranged Christian hymns, and Jeon included his own compositions 'Home', 'Dokdo', and 'Thinking of You', the first two of which can be regarded as diasporic music. 'Home' expresses his memories and longing for his home country while 'Dokdo' shows special sentimentality for the small Korean island of Dokdo (an island whose ownership is contested by Japan).

KAYA have performed throughout Europe. It is common that Korean musicians living in Europe will perform across Europe as this is more cost-effective than bringing musicians from Korea. KAYA has been invited to events such as the Korean Night at the 2015 World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, and the 2014 Korea Eureka Day in Oslo, Norway. They have also given small intimate concerts at Kingston Hospital and at the Chelsea and Westminster Hospital, consoling patients through music.



**Figure 6.1. KAYA performing at Festival Asia in 2015 (photo by the author).**

I attended and observed three of their performances, at the Korean food festival in New Malden; Festival Asia 2015 at the Tobacco Dock (Figure 6.1); and 'Winter Sonata' at the London Full Gospel Church. Their programme consisted of pieces chosen to be appropriate for each event, yet the three shared something in common, and they told me that one of their principal aims was to demonstrate as diverse a variety of pieces as possible. So, they juxtaposed traditional and contemporary pieces, highlighting the characteristics of each instrument by playing solo and then performing together to show the beauty of harmony. Many of their pieces are deeply related to Korean identity, so in February 2017, I asked what their intention in composing was:

While living in the UK, we have had the chance to think about our home country from a different perspective compared to when we lived in Korea. Also, we have always aimed to introduce Korean music to people here in the best possible way and try to put Korean sentiments into our music. 'New Arirang', 'Dokdo', and 'Unification' were composed with this in mind. 'Unification' was inspired by the many North Korean refugees living around here. Getting along with them, we thought again about the meaning of unification. We would not have thought about such concerns if we lived in our home country.



### 1.1.2. Choi Jeung-hyun

Choi is a traditional Korean percussionist who first came to the UK in 2005 to participate at WOMAD<sup>179</sup> as a member of Dulsori, a music and performance group founded by Moon Gap-hyun and Choi in 1984 in South Korea. Choi has taught Korean percussion, and actively performed as a member of Dulsori in renowned Korean festivals such as the Jeonju International Sori Festival and Yeowoorak Festival for many years. Dulsori gained fame particularly for their programme *World-beat Binari*.

Since the 1980s, the *samulnori* quartet has been a representative Korean music (Hesselink 2012, 2-3; Howard 2015, 1). The demand for *samulnori* players has dramatically increased all over the world. Dulsori broadened the boundaries of the genre, beginning at the Singapore Arts Mart Showcase in 2003, and then performing all over the world, including in the Netherlands and Belgium in 2004, in the UK for five years in a row from 2005, and in the USA, Mexico, and Columbia in 2008. With an active schedule of performances in Europe, Dulsori decided to open a London branch in 2007, and Choi settled in London to run it. After settling here, she performed with Dulsori at events such as the London Thames Festival in 2007 and Liverpool Korean Festival in 2008. She organised *samulnori* workshops across London. She offered regular lessons at the London Korean School, at SOAS, for members of the Korean Buddhist temple Youn Hwa Sa, at the University of the Third Age (UTAK), for Korean children and seniors, and for British people. She uses different materials depending on the age, experience, and purpose of her students and audiences. I interviewed her in February 2017, and asked what difference there was between teaching in the UK and Korea:

There are two main teaching differences between the UK and Korea. One is that I need to be skilled in multiple disciplines in order to be able to teach different materials to each group. As I'm the only Korean professional percussion player in the UK, I need to be a multi-instrumentalist to cover all classes myself. The other difference is that

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<sup>179</sup> WOMAD stands for the World of Music, Arts and Dance, and is an international festival that brings together artists from all over the globe. It was founded in 1982 (<http://womad.org>, accessed 25 April 2018).

classes in the UK are more focused on encouraging learners' interest, whereas I concentrated more on perfecting skills when I was teaching in Korea. People living here have less experience and access to Korean traditional culture, so find it more difficult and awkward to learn Korean music. Thus, I try to boost their interest as much as I can.



**Figure 6.2. Choi Jeung-hyun performing at the Korean Arts Festival in 2019 (courtesy of Choi Jeunghyun).**

It is a well-known fact that musical preferences are linked to familiarity (e.g. North and Hargreaves 1995; Schubert 2007; Pereira et al. 2011; Rohrmeier and Rebuschat 2012). Hence, the purpose and way of teaching a traditional music in a remote place are unavoidably different to the techniques used in the country of origin. Thus, learning Korean music is more difficult for those living abroad than those living in Korea.

Choi also served as chairperson of the Korean Artists Association UK for two years from 2015. During her incumbency, she planned and led two cultural events themed around '*Arirang*' in 2015 and '*I, Kid*' in 2017. She has also improvised with musicians from different genres. She is, however, more interested in transmission, education and promotion than her own music-making.

### 1.1.3. Kim Hyelim

Kim is a *daegeum* (traditional Korean horizontal bamboo flute) player who came to London in 2012. She started her PhD in Ethnomusicology in Sydney, Australia, but moved to London to work with her supervisor, Keith Howard, starting her second year of study at SOAS, University of London. In Sydney, and before that in Brisbane, she had begun to collaborate with musicians from different cultural backgrounds. I interviewed her in February 2017:

I did not have much time or many opportunities to make music myself or to play with people from cultures other than traditional Korean or Western classical, because I was busy covering the university curriculum. And, before then I had only practised traditional pieces while in Korea. Of course, I had done some collaborations but they were not as diverse as those possible in Australia. I broadened my activities and collaborated with the indigenous *didgeridoo*, with jazz, with electronics, as well as with Western classical musicians. I found it really interesting that I could play without constraints with such musicians.

Settling in London, she has continued her career as a Korean musician. She has been invited to perform by Korean communities all over Europe, where she is mostly asked to play Korean traditional pieces. But opportunities came not only from Koreans, but also from Europeans who organise Korean events; they also asked her to play traditional rather than contemporary music. Such events included Kingston Welcomes Korea and at the Victoria and Albert museum. Today, though, she states her performances split 30% traditional and 70% contemporary music. Partly, this is because since 2016 she has been a member of Notes Inegales, a Club Inegales house ensemble created by Peter Wiegold and David Purser. There are 13 members playing instruments ranging from piano to electric guitar, as well as the *daegeum*. The ensemble presents both improvised and written music, yet seeks to provide new and spontaneous performances. They not only present their own music, but have performed with over 75 performers, mostly in London.<sup>180</sup> As a member of a British ensemble, she

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<sup>180</sup> <http://www.clubinegales.com/archives/past-guests>, accessed 29 April 2018.

presents new music alongside other musicians. I asked her how she defines her music:

All of my music-making is part Korean music, but ends up as different types depending on the context of a performance and the people I play with. My music cannot be defined within any one genre, but I believe it is still all Korean, since my music presents the Korean identity which is inherent in me, my instrument, and the playing skills I developed while training in Korea.

Kim gives weight to improvisation as a composition method. Her performance *Woman at Point Zero* is a case in point. Five musicians with different backgrounds – Korean, Japanese, Turkish, Armenian and Egyptian/German – played their own instruments, but also were actors presenting body movements with their instruments. The musicians discussed how to adjust themselves to intercultural music-making, and how to express a story with music and movement. Although composers worked with them, space and freedom were given to the performers as they were the best people to use their instruments. The musicians, including Kim, had a three-day residency on five repeated occasions to create the music they performed.



**Figure 6.3. Kim Hyelim (far left) performing with Alice Zawadzki (right) at the K-Music Festival in 2017 (courtesy of Korean Cultural Centre UK).**

Kim has collaborated all over the world as she searches for new ways of performing the *daegeum*. She has performed several times with Alice Zawadzki,

a London based violinist, including at the K-Music Festival in 2017 (broadcast on the BBC Radio3 *Jazz Now* programme), and at the Vortex Jazz Club. She has also performed and recorded with a jazz percussionist Simon Barker and a trumpeter Peter Knight in Sydney. She has played in concerts using new types of scores such as the graphic *Visualising music* and creating sonic representations of calendar dates and natural materials. One of her date-based performances was at the EFG London Jazz Festival. Regarding her activities, she commented:

I always wonder how much I can respond to a given situation. I don't want to be bound to a specific genre because it is limiting, and this I want to resist. I believe harsh sounds are sometimes needed when I need to express a particular feeling, and I pursue music which contains a wide range of emotions rather than just making beautiful sounds.

As a professional traditional instrumentalist living overseas, she plays not only traditional but also a diversity of new music, the new being composed by herself or developed through collaborations with others. Beyond tradition, she has long sought to transform and reinterpret the *daegeum* on her own terms within other genres. She actively shares her music and performances not only in Europe and Australia, but back in Korea. She could be said to have something of 'a magpie attitude' (Stokes 1994, 16). In September 2018, she collaborated with an Australian jazz drummer, Simon Barker. Breaking the tradition of *daegeum* performance, where one would sit still on the floor, she moved around the stage following the music while playing the instrument. According to an audience member, this behaviour would be surprising for anybody playing traditional music in Korea, but she received good feedback; indeed, I have been told in conversation with young musicians that she inspires them.

#### **1.1.4. Lee Eunseog**

Lee was born in South Korea, but emigrated to the UK at the age of five with his family. His case is different from the three already discussed, as he grew up surrounded by Western culture, thanks to his parents who had a keen interest in Western classical music. His musical talent allowed him entry to Westminster

Abbey Choir School at the age of eight.<sup>181</sup> He received formal music instruction at the school, not only vocal training for choir music but also piano and orchestral instruments. He then attended a private high school where, while not specialising in music, he could keep his interest alive. In the late 1990s, when he was 15, he was introduced to K-pop for the first time on a flight to Korea. He told me in August 2016:

At that time, Japanese pop was really popular all over the world, including in the UK. I was also into J-pop. One day, I got a flight to Korea for a holiday and listened to K-pop for the first time. It was similar to J-pop, but something was different. The sound impressed me and I instantly became a fan.

He then tried to compose for the first time, creating a piece based on K-pop ballads dedicated to his family, reflecting on them as isolated Koreans living far from their homeland. The melody and lyrics, he recalled, were very sentimental.

Lee's musical journey continued at King's College London, where he majored in composition. During his BA, he tried to bring to mind traditional Korean music, which he had seen and heard when visiting Korea. He regarded it as special and unique, so decided to write a piece using features and techniques drawn from it. However, this was not easy to do, as access to it was very limited. He watched many videos and listened to recordings on the Internet, and sought out Korean concerts and events across London in order to observe features and playing skills. He came to know various people who majored in Korean music in London and could, by association, study what he needed for his composition.

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<sup>181</sup> Westminster Abbey Choir School is a boarding preparatory school for about 30 boys aged between 8 and 13 who sing as choristers in the abbey choir (<http://www.westminster-abbey.org/choir-school>, accessed 30 April 2018).

## DAYBREAK (새벽)

Music by EUNSEOG LEE  
(작곡 이은석)

$\text{♩} = 60$

Score details:

- System 1:**
  - Voice:** Rests.
  - Clarinet in Bb:** Long melodic line, *mf* at the end.
  - Janggu:** Rhythmic pattern, *f* and *p* dynamics.
  - Gayageum:** Rhythmic pattern, *f* and *p* dynamics.
  - Piano:** Complex texture with triplets, *f*, *p*, *mf*, and *ppp* dynamics. Includes *8va* and *Ped* markings.
- System 2:**
  - Voice:** Enters with a melodic line.
  - Cl.:** Melodic line, *mp* dynamic.
  - Janggu:** Rhythmic pattern.
  - Gaym.:** Rhythmic pattern.
  - Pno.:** Continues the texture, *ppp* dynamic.

**Figure 6.4. 'Daybreak' score (author's collection).**

He discovered a competition, *Korea, Our Stories*, a branding competition held by the Korean Ministry of Culture and Tourism, and embarked on writing music for it. He was motivated by the idea of *hongik in-gan* (humanitarianism), which is considered the founding principle of Gojoseon, the first state in Korean history, and which is also the fundamental ideology behind the Education Law of the Republic of Korea. He chose the title 'Daybreak' to reflect this ideology. In an interview with the Korean Broadcasting System, he mentioned that the humanitarian idea is not only representative of Korea, but can be applied to all

people, and for this reason, he considered it the most appropriate theme to brand Korea. He intended 'Daybreak' to appeal to both Koreans and Westerners, and considered this the most important thing. Hence, he brought together Korean and Western instruments, using piano and clarinet to represent the Western, and 25-stringed *gayageum* (Korean zither) and *janggu* (hourglass-shaped double-headed drum) as Korean counterparts. To the instruments he added *gu-eum*, a traditional style of singing sounds without lyrics. He won first prize in the competition; most of the applicants were Korean, but it was a naturalised British man who won, representing Korea.

Lee's success can be explained as a case of idealisation. Giuriati (2005, 141) points out that the musical activities of the Cambodian diaspora in the US are different from the contemporary cultural reality of Cambodia due to the diaspora having imaginary ideas of the homeland. In the same vein, as a second-generation Korean living overseas, Lee did not have much experience of contemporary Korea, and had to learn about the country through books and the Internet. While the ideal of humanitarianism motivated him, it is difficult for people to consider this as the way to organise their everyday lives these days due to the limitation of society, the changing times, and the lack of interest by ordinary people. This is certainly true in Korea (B.-g. Seo 2012, 13), even though Korean scholars assert that humanitarianism is required in contemporary society (e.g. Oh 2010; T.S. Kim and Shin 2015; Ik Soo Kim 2017). Lee's deep concern for his home country and exploration of his own identity led him to consider his roots, but his music and ideas, beyond idealisation, aimed to awaken Korean minds to a forgotten past, and arouse their empathy for others. Lee has continued to write for Korean and Western instruments. He presented 'Cloud Play' for *gayageum* and piano at the Korean Artists Association's exhibition opening concert in 2017, and wrote 'Samdo Arirang/Arirang of three regions' for four Korean instruments – *gayageum*, *daegeum*, *haegeum*, and *janggu* – for a performance in Italy in 2018. In 2019, he began working on a project combining Korean and Western vocalisations, selected by Sound and Music, the UK artist development scheme. I asked him about his musical identity:

Although I grew up in the UK, it is undeniable that my parents are Korean and that I was influenced by them. Not only because I'm



Korean, but I really think Korean music is special and has different qualities to Western music. However, it is also true that the sound can be unfamiliar and strange to Westerners. So, I want to find harmony between Western and Korean music and write pieces which are tuneful to both Koreans and Westerners. I still seek solutions and I know it will take a long time. Writing music with Korean elements is a way to find my own roots as a Korean and to provide me with a musical balance between my dual identity as both British and Korean.

## **1.2. Western art musicians**

### **1.2.1. Yu Byung-Yun**

Yu is now in his sixties and is one of the first generation of Korean immigrants who came to the UK – he arrived in 1991. As churches in Korea are symbolic space of the influx of Western music (O. Hwang 2009, 26; Harkness 2014, 7), many Koreans had encountered classical music for the first time at churches in the past, and Yu was also one of those who did. There, the wife of the minister majored in piano, so he started to learn from her. He then went to Chongshin University in Seoul, South Korea, majoring in composition, moving to a new church and beginning to study conducting from the church's ensemble and choir director. After graduating, he managed a small music academy for local residents. He came to London as a tourist and was fascinated. He closed down his academy and moved to the UK for further study. His wife and two children followed as soon as he had settled, and for the first three years he studied English as he needed to pass a language qualification to apply for a music conservatoire. While doing so, he learned violin as a part-time student at Guildhall School of Music and Drama for two and half years. He then entered London College of Music, majoring in conducting.

When he finished the London College of Music course, he prepared to return back to Korea, but because of the 1997 economic crisis in Korea he decided to remain longer in the UK. One of his friends suggested he organise an amateur orchestra, which he did in 1998. This, the Thames Philharmonia, gradually grew and established its reputation. Today, it is based in South West London and performs at least three concerts a year, as well as hosting workshops in the

summer.<sup>182</sup> The orchestra is a registered charity (No. 1125845) and is managed by six committee members, including Yu. It aims to provide opportunities for multicultural local community members and others to engage in a high standard of music performance. I asked Yu in November 2016 in interview about the orchestra:

Most members are retired musicians or people who have jobs other than playing music, such as music teachers. As an amateur charity-based orchestra, hiring young professional musicians exceeds our budget, but we can hire a few additional musicians with the amount of money we have. The number of members is around 30 at the moment and they all have either more than a Grade 8 or have previous orchestral experience.

The orchestra usually plays famous work by Handel, Elgar, Mozart, and Beethoven. However, making most of the opportunity of having a Korean conductor, it will usually include Korean children's songs arranged by Yu as encores. The reason for choosing children's songs is that Yu feels nostalgia for his childhood and the audiences feel empathy with the songs. The orchestra has occasionally played Korean pieces such as '*Non Gae*' and '*Korea Fantasy*,' composed by Ahn Eak-Tai (1906-1965)<sup>183</sup> and '*Sarang/Love*' by Hong Nan-Pa (1898-1941).<sup>184</sup> Furthermore, Yu has organised performances with Korean traditional musicians in order to introduce Korean instruments and music. Hence, the orchestra performed with the *gayageum* player Jung Ji-eun, playing '*Far East Calm Suite for Gayageum and Orchestra*' composed by Roh Tae Hwan,<sup>185</sup> and '*Concerto for Sanjo*

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<sup>182</sup> <http://thamesphilharmonia.org.uk/about-us/>, accessed 17 February 2020.

<sup>183</sup> Ahn is well-known for composing the South Korean national anthem, '*Aegukga*'. He was born in Pyeongyang, studied music in Japan and the US, and conducted over 200 orchestras. '*Non Gae*' is a piece honouring a patriot woman, and was performed at the Royal Albert Hall, London, by the London New Philharmonic Orchestra in 1965 under Ahn as conductor. '*Korea Fantasy*' was composed in 1938 for an orchestra and choir. It includes the melody of the national anthem and is considered his masterpiece.

<sup>184</sup> Hong was born in Hwaseong, and studied music in Japan and the US. He composed numerous art songs and children's songs, including '*Gohyang-ui bom*/Spring in the hometown' and '*Bongseonhwa*/Balsam Flower'. '*Sarang/Love*' is about innocent love and was included in the 1933 volume *Joseon gayo jakgokjip* (Korean Pop Music Compositions).

<sup>185</sup> Events Editor of London Korean Links, "Jieun Jung plays work for gayageum

*Gayageum*' by Kim Hee-Jo (1920-2001).<sup>186</sup> He mentioned that by profiling these pieces he expresses his own identity and creates a unique identity for the orchestra.

### 1.2.2. Hong Jun-hyuk

Hong is a violinist now in his seventies. He is originally from North Korea and came to the UK in 2007. He started learning violin at the age of 12 at his father's suggestion. His father knew how to play the piano, as he used to be an elder in a church during the Japanese colonial occupation, and noticed his son's musical talent. Hong went to an arts high school in Mishan Shi, China, until the age of 19, where he learned the violin as well as composition and music theory. He then went to a music conservatoire in Harbin, China, majoring in violin. He mentioned that he had learned in China, because doing so was possible for North Koreans at the time, before North Korea began its more isolationist period. In the past, there were more symphony orchestras in North Korea than today, since the national financial circumstances were not as dire as more recently, and orchestras often played symphonies by Beethoven and Tchaikovsky. After graduating from the conservatoire, he joined the South Hamgyeong Province Art Troupe.<sup>187</sup> He was proud that he had been a member, as he told me in interview in July 2016:

I was a member of the South Hamgyeong Art Troupe for 18 years. There were art troupes in each province run by the government and this was the largest one, having around 300 members. The troupe consisted of 80 Western classical orchestra members, 30 Korean music orchestra members, as well as dancers, vocalists, and engineers. The troupe premiered one of the five revolutionary operas and Baek Go-san, who was the first Korean winner at the International Tchaikovsky Competition in 1957, used to be a member.<sup>188</sup>

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and orchestra", 31 May 2013, <http://londonkoreanlinks.net/2013/05/31/jieun-jung-plays-work-for-gayageum-and-orchestra/>, accessed 20 February 2020.

<sup>186</sup> Kim attempted to use Korean traditional music in a new format and created music based on traditional music.

<sup>187</sup> Also called the *Hamheung Yesuldan*, taking its name from the provincial capital.

<sup>188</sup> The revolutionary opera the troupe performed was not one of the five core

Once Kim Jong Il succeeded Kim Il Sung as leader in the mid-1990s, Hong's family began to face difficulties because his father had once been an elder in a church. Hong escaped the country in 1996, staying in China for six years, then moving to South Korea in 2002. While in South Korea, he bought a violin and played it at the church he attended. After moving to the UK, he continued to play the violin to accompany the church at his new church. He used to participate in the Thames Philharmonia, but not anymore, as he does not have enough energy due to his age; he also found it difficult to get along with other members due to his low level of English proficiency.

From 2010, he began to teach violin to North Korean children without charging fees, sensing this was his mission as he himself had once been a North Korean refugee. He initially taught three to four students a week, but his popularity meant more students came, including South Koreans. As students progressed, they started to pay for lessons, and he now teaches around 10 students up to Grade 7. His grandchild has also studied violin from him since 2006, and today (2019) attends Westminster Abbey Choir School.

As a diasporic Korean, Hong occasionally participates in community events. He has played children's songs such as '*Gohyang-ui bom*/Spring in hometown' and '*Uri-ui sowon*/Our wish', and well-known Korean-style lieder such as '*Seon-guja*/Pioneer,' in his own arrangements for violin. He also sometimes plays with the Arirang Gayageum Ensemble or other (government) classical musicians. When playing a new piece, he arranges it himself. He was once a talented composer, winning second prize at the national music competition celebrating the 20th anniversary of the Korean Workers' Party in 1965.<sup>189</sup> He has composed numerous pieces, including operettas, and the arts troupe often played his pieces, which mostly reflected the state's political ideology. In South Korea, he wrote monthly Christian praise pieces for church services. However, he no longer composes:

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revolutionary operas, but '*Han Jawidanwoneui Unmyeong*/the Destiny of a self-reliant soldier', in 1974.

<sup>189</sup> The Workers' Party of Korea (Joseon Rodongdang) is the ruling party of North Korea. Founded in 10 October 1945, North Koreans celebrate its foundation every year as a national holiday, with cultural events such as concerts and exhibitions.

I believe music includes and reflects the trend of the times. When I actively composed, it was around the time of the Chollima Movement (*Cheollima undong*), so I composed pieces that reflected the ideology. However, the ideology and the times have changed, and I know that my voice no longer resonates in our current era.

I asked whether he still plays the pieces he played in North Korea, but he answered that it has been a long time and he can barely remember any of them. There are a few songs he recalls, apart from pieces including the North Korean political ideology, none of which he wants to play. Today, his musical life is centred around Christian music, so, although he teaches Western classical music and uses the Suzuki method, he usually plays hymns or Christian pieces he has composed, since only these give him peace.

### **1.2.3. Yu Sulki**

Yu is a violinist born in 1985 in South Korea. Thanks to her mother, who is a violin teacher, she started playing the violin at the age of five, but did not learn it properly; her mother's students taught her when she was young, her mother only assisting her in practice. She moved to Lausanne when she was 10 for three years due to her father's work, and attended the Conservatoire de Lausanne. After returning to Korea, she continued studying violin at Yewon School and Seoul Arts High School (which are the renowned special middle and high schools for the arts). In 2001, during her first high school year, she moved to the UK to study at the Purcell School with David Takeno. She wanted to go to an English-speaking country and decided on the UK, because Europe is the birthplace of Western classical music, and since she preferred UK music training to that of the US. In 2003, after two years at the Purcell School, she joined the Guildhall School of Music and Drama on a full scholarship. During her undergraduate years, she has received numerous awards including from the Yehudi Menuhin International Violin competition in 2006, the Szigeti-Hubay International Violin competition in 2007, and the Martin Musical Scholarship Fund. She pursued her study at Chapelle Musicale Reine Elisabeth (Queen Elizabeth Music Chapel in Belgium) under Augustin Dumay, commuting to Belgium from London since most of her engagements were in London. During this time, she was nominated for awards by

the Royal Philharmonic Society in both 2008 and 2009. Since she had studied violin in both Korea and Britain, I asked her in interview in Putney in June 2019 about the different perspectives on studying and playing classical music:

When I studied at the Yewon School, there were around 40 students who were all of a high standard. The prevailing opinion was that once you have technique, you can express yourself better irrespective of what you want to accomplish. Thus, everyone excelled in technique. However, when I came to the UK, I realised that people think that an understanding of the history, structure, and meaning of music are more important than technical skills. I think it is important to combine the two, both a polished performance without understanding of the music and a performance knowing the meaning of the music but lacking the skills to fully appeal to the audience.



**Figure 6.5. Yu Sulki performing at the Korean Sounds 2016 (courtesy of the KCCUK).**

She told me that she had not been involved much with events organised by the Korean community. About 10 years ago there was a one-off chamber orchestra performance consisting of Korean musicians and organised by Choo Soong, the first violinist of the Philharmonia Orchestra at the time. However, this could not be continued due to the busy schedules of its members. If her schedule allows, she

would like to participate more in Korean-related events so that she can interact more with Koreans musically. I asked what kind of music she pursues and what her goals are:

Music is not merely a job, but a life to me. Even for a small performance, I have to condition my mind and body every day. Otherwise, I cannot present a perfect performance to the audience. I always keep this in mind and try to make my lifestyle fit with the music. I pursue music which enables me to interact with the audience. It might be a cliché to say that I want to play music which comforts and touches people's hearts, but I think that is the right answer. I do not want to play music for myself, but for others. I do not think that music which cannot interact with people is valuable. I want to pursue my career step by step as I have done so far, rather than making any huge goal.

#### **1.2.4. Korean Students at the Royal Academy of Music**

I conducted a group interview on 17 March 2018 with four students aged between 23 and 31 attending or having graduated from the Royal Academy of Music. Arguably, they cannot be included as members of the diaspora since they study in London, in effect, as short-term residents. However, I consider them members of the Korean diaspora, since it has been greatly influenced by short-term residents, as outlined in Chapter 3 and, of course, they might in the future change their status to permanent residents through marriage or career.

Lee Seung-won started to play piano at the age of four, and pursued the typical route of becoming a classical musician in Korea. She graduated from Yewon School and Seoul Arts High School, and went to Konkuk University majoring in piano. She came to the UK in 2012, received an MA and a professional diploma in piano accompaniment at the Royal Academy, and is now a freelance accompanist. Hwang Hyun-jung is the third child in her family and started to learn piano following her sister and brother. She did not take it as seriously as her siblings, but it became central to her life when she entered a music high school, Sunhwa Arts High School. She entered university in Korea, but left during the first year. She came to the UK in 2011 for the undergraduate course at the Royal Academy. She was taking a professional diploma at the time of my interview and

was preparing her graduation performance. Bae Sung-woo also started piano at an early age but became serious after coming to the UK in 2006. He went to the Purcell School for his sixth form, and at the time of the interview was in the last year of the BMus at the Academy. Kim Ha-min first ventured into music because of influence of his parents. His mother used to run a piano academy in Korea, but his family emigrated to the US when he was a child. After arriving there, he took weekly cello lessons, later going to the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill to major in Liberal Arts. However, he left the university and moved to London in 2015 to start a BMus at the Royal Academy. At the time of the interview, he had begun his first year of the MMus degree.

All four have experiences in common, in that they started to learn music at an early age. Although studying music might have been a privilege in the 1950s, it had become a common activity by the 1990s. Hwang Okon points out that 'Koreans overwhelmingly favored Western instruments for their children's music education in 1991,' citing a survey (2009, 28-29). Many parents believed that the experience was essential for their child's early education and that it had a meaning for social status, much as Zheng (2010, 145) describes for Chinese society. Even though the four also learned other instruments or began to train in other subjects, the instruments they currently major in are those that they want to specialise in. I wondered why they chose the Royal Academy. Hwang auditioned on the advice of her former teacher, and Lee participated in a music camp in the US which influenced her decision to study abroad. Bae had already studied in the UK and wanted to enter one of the best music conservatoires in the UK. Although Kim had studied in the US, he found his needs better met by European schools and moved to the UK. All four believe there are different Western classical music approaches in the US and UK in terms of expression, acoustics, and stage presentation. A greater lyricism characterises UK practice, but stage presentation is not as pronounced in the UK as in the US. All four feel the UK approach 'works' for them.

I asked whether they had issues in regards to being Korean, or more broadly Asian. Kim answered that he never felt any estrangement, but rather satisfaction at being in the UK. Lee added that she was able to broaden and deepen her understanding of music in London. Hwang agreed, saying that she has never



been seen as an 'Other' in London, since there are many Asian Western classical musicians around. Bae, however, mentioned the racial stereotype of Asians being technically remarkable and not making mistakes. This was also raised by Yoshihara (2008, 61) in her account, the Japanese musician Kyoko Takezawa asserts 'there is a stereotype of Asian musicians as technically very reliable, and that may be why they are good at competitions'. This fixed idea is likely to be more prevalent in Europe than the US, and Yang notes that 'stereotypes persist, and Asian musicians are faced with the choice of either erasing their difference and being considered no better than a cultural mimic or of foregrounding difference and conforming to existing Orientalist frameworks' (2007, 22). The four students believed that the stereotyping of Asian musicians resulted from the hard training system in Asia that focused on technical skills from an early age. They were, though, satisfied with the different approach of the British music education system, which encouraged them to have a deeper understanding of music.

I assumed all four would participate in musical activities at churches, since Harkness points out that the vast majority of Western classical music vocalists in Korea are Christian (2014, 5). As expected, all four are Christian – Bae is Catholic and the others Protestant. I asked how much their religion affects their music, but they all insisted that religion had only a minor influence on their activities. While it is true that they can have more opportunities in churches, playing instruments or participating in choirs, churches are not the only place to listen to Western music. Unlike the experience of Yu Byung-Yun, Western music was already prevalent in South Korea in the 1990s, and learning it was nothing special for their generation.

Korean musicians playing Western classical music are often invited to take part in community events, where it is common to hear Korea-related pieces either arranged (for example, folksongs) or written by Korean composers. Lee mentioned she had played Korean pieces at such events, either by choice or because this was requested. She believed playing Korean pieces provided a way of presenting Korean identity, and Hwang added that it was not possible to exclude one's national or ethnic identity entirely, but rather that this identity served as a special marker in her activities as a musician. Royal Academy students organised a concert in February 2017, *UK & Korea, a festival of Korean musicians*

of RAM. Twenty-four students participated, giving ten items that ranged from first Western pieces through three Korean-style lieder (*gagok*) to two arrangements of Korean folksongs. Lee and Kim played while Bae and Hwang were in the audience. The five Western pieces were no different to any ordinary classical programme. The three lieder were 'Sin Arirang/New Arirang' composed by Kim Dong Jin (1913-2009),<sup>190</sup> 'Hyangsu/Nostalgia' by Kim Hee Gab (1936-),<sup>191</sup> and 'San-a/Oh! mountain' by Shin Dong Su (1958-).<sup>192</sup> Lyrics were provided with English translations. The two folksong arrangements were of 'Arirang' and 'Taepyeongga/Song of peace'. However, these arrangements seemed not to work well; few recognised what the original folksongs were. Both had been arranged by Kim Aera, who is a composer with a connection to the concert's director. Since it was the first concert organised by Academy students, from my point of view it might have been better to play pieces by well-known Korean composers, such as by Yun Isang (1917-1995),<sup>193</sup> yet the short preparation period left insufficient time to do so. The two performers among the four I interviewed also admitted they had faced challenges. They had too little time for preparation, and couldn't discuss the performance overall; they could only follow their leader's commands, because it was difficult for such a large group of musicians to agree; and they recognised they should have been more careful in selecting the programme, to better express the theme. Setting aside the arguments, however, the concert was

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<sup>190</sup> 'New Arirang' was originally written by Yang Myeong-mun. Kim composed over 500 songs including Korean-style lieder, children's songs and military songs, and has many representative works including

'Mongnyeonhwa/Magnolia', 'Gagopa/Wish to go' and 'Suseonhwa/Daffodil'.

<sup>191</sup> 'Nostalgia' is a famous poem by Jung Ji-yong. Kim is better known as a pop composer, for which he received the lifetime achievement award at the 2016 Korean Music Awards.

<sup>192</sup> 'Oh! mountain' was written by Shin Heung-chul. It is Shin's representative work describing one's heavy heart leaving behind his hometown.

<sup>193</sup> A Korean-born composer who made his later career in West Germany. He focused on the expression of East Asia through Western avantgarde techniques, attempting to combine Korean music with Western instruments (see Yoo, Youngdae, 2000, *Isang Yun: His Compositional Technique as Manifested in the Two Clarinet Quintets*, LSU Historical Dissertations and Theses, 7176, p.17; Hur, Dae-Sik, 2005, *A combination of Asian language with foundation of western music: an analysis of Isang Yun's Salomo for flute solo or alto flute solo*, DMA dissertation at University of North Texas, p.25).

significant because it was the first of its kind and a large number of Korean students participated.

My last question asked was about their career paths and whether they intended to stay in the UK. Bae had decided to go back to Korea after graduation and pursue a new career. Kim said he could go anywhere to earn money, but would continue as a musician. Hwang and Lee wanted to stay in the UK as long as their visas allowed, since they felt they could have more performing opportunities without spending too much money. Hwang Okon notes that pursuing a career in classical music generally requires a 'huge amount of financial commitment' and suffers from a 'lack of ability to generate income' (2009, 103, 156). The four interviewees, similarly, all agreed that living as a classical musician was not something one did for financial gains, but for self-fulfilment, and that doing so is more difficult in Korea than elsewhere. Harkness discusses, in this respect, the homecoming recitals of Korean vocalists, where the singers are expected to fund the concerts since there is no consumer market in Seoul for Western vocal performances (*ibid.*, 181-82). By analysing the number of tickets sold at the Seoul Arts Centre concert hall, Choi Yeon Shik (2013, 107) determined that concerts hosted by cultural foundations or public organisations charged audiences more compared to those hosted by individuals, while foreign orchestras and musicians attract bigger audiences than local musicians. Recognising this, all four students regarded living as a classical musician in the UK would be a better choice than in Korea, since there are more performance opportunities, larger audiences, and more venues.

### **1.3. Korean pop musicians**

The popularity of Korean pop worldwide began in the late 1990s in Asia and spread rapidly all over the world, along with films, dramas, fashion, and dance under the Korean Wave (Youna Kim 2014, 1). The fever for K-pop also reached Koreans overseas, specifically second-generation Koreans in North America, who became cultural mediators and creators, thereby overcoming their marginalised status in society (J.S. Park 2014, 132). Not only pop musicians from the Korean peninsula, but also many Korean musicians living overseas have played an active part around in the emerging phenomenon. For instance, the song 'Like a G6' by

US-based hip-hop group Far East Movement has two members who are Korean, and was ranked first on the Billboard chart in late October 2010. Likewise, the Korean-American electronic musician Yaeji performs actively, particularly in the US, and was named the BBC Sound of 2018.<sup>194</sup> However, most Korean pop musicians outside of Korea are restricted to the US and Canada due to the large population of Korean migrants in such places. Still though few in number, there are some Korean pop musicians based in the UK. I interviewed two such musicians.

### **1.3.1. Grace Kim**

Grace Kim was the only Korean pop singer actively performing in the UK during 2017 when I interviewed her.<sup>195</sup> She started to play the piano from a very early age, and regularly played at the church she attended. One day, she realised that playing a piece created by someone else was not enough, so at the age of 10 she wrote a short piano piece for the first time. She began to write her first real composition a year later, which piece she considers to be more authentic and developed.

At the age of 19, she chose to study classical music composition, similar to all Korean songwriters she admired at that time. She reckoned that having a background in classical music would be helpful in improving her composition knowledge. She enrolled at Sookmyung Women's University in Korea, but had a hard time studying classical composition while writing pop songs simultaneously, because the two styles required very different ways of writing. After graduation, she chose to study popular music from scratch. Since 2010, Kim has actively performed as a singer-songwriter, first for three years in Korea where she participated in many competitions and festivals. In 2013, she suddenly chose to become a gospel singer, winning the gold prize at the 16th Korean Gospel Singer Competition. Afterwards, she performed for several church-related concerts. She came to the UK in 2014 to study pop piano at Liverpool Institute for Performing

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<sup>194</sup> The BBC Sound of 2018, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/articles/2ZxqdcnQZnLLK7L739r4XX/yaeji>, accessed 2 October 2019.

<sup>195</sup> <http://www.gracekim.uk>, accessed 17 October 2018.

Arts (LIPA), the institute founded by former Beatles member Paul McCartney. In fact, she applied to many universities in London and elsewhere, and received several offers. After visiting and seeing student gigs at each place, she decided to enrol at LIPA where she found students remarkably competent, and she preferred its more challenging environment. She learned a wide range of genres from jazz harmony to serialism, as well as learning business management, the music industry, branding, and even how to submit tax returns. All of this proved useful to her becoming a musician in the UK.

Kim formed a band with drummer Adam Fairclough and bassist Robyn Wilkinson while at LIPA. She had never planned to do so, and performed by herself on piano at first. One day, she felt something was missing in her performances, and made some demo songs which she could play by herself. She found other musicians who matched her well in terms of musical chemistry and personality, and set up the band as a trio with backing vocalists. It started with the theme 'sad music can heal,' so its materials mainly used sad lyrics, which gave their songs a calm and sentimental atmosphere. The Grace Kim Band released their first single 'No One' in 2016. Since then, they have been actively performing, including in Liverpool, Sheffield and London. The first single was selected by the BBC. I went to her gig in March 2017 at Cargo in Shoreditch, London – a well-known venue. It was full with a mixed audience, everyone standing in front of the stage holding drinks. The band performed for around 40 minutes, Kim singing eight songs which included 'You Make Me Believe', 'I Don't Wanna Leave', 'Miss Philosopher' and the debut single 'No One'. After seeing her, I realised, firstly, that all her songs are in English although her mother tongue is Korean. In an email interview exchange in May 2017, she mentioned that performing is an expressive activity, and if she cannot convey what she wants to say through music to her audience because of a language barrier, it does not have the intended meaning and is not expressive. This is why she performs in English, even though she has written many songs in Korean. Also, most of her music is close to R&B and Soul, mixed with gospel, and concerning this, she told me:

When I started to perform as a solo musician, my songs were not particularly R&B or Soul. However, now I focus on these genres, to have a certain musical persona and consistency in the music that I

perform with my band. All my songs are created through my thoughts and feelings. So it could be true that my Christian faith affects my song-writing. I used to be a gospel singer. It sets my world and my values. My songs reflect this. However, it is not my intention to put obvious Christian messages in my songs when I perform as Grace Kim.

She considers music the most effective healing medium, which was the reason for the theme behind the band. She emphasised to me that she occasionally feels depressed; she has issues like anyone else. She thinks of herself as being a person who tends to not enjoy talking about her issues. Instead, she uses songs as her medium, and this works as a stress-release so is part of her self-healing process. She believes that her songs have a positive effect on listeners who have similar emotional experiences, and hopes they can function as an interactive healing process for listeners.

As a Korean living abroad, she performed at the Kingston Korean Festival in 2017. I got to see her sing two songs, playing a guitar. This was more of an acoustic set compared to her normal performances. She again sang in English, as most of the audience were local British. She not only participates at Korean festivals, but also attends a Korean church in London, introduced by a Korean acquaintance. I wondered what musical identity she thinks she has in her music:

For a couple of years, I have been trying hard to make my music sound like the music in this country. I have a very strong Korean musical background and that enabled my music to sound very Korean, which sometimes could be received as 'corny', 'old school' or 'Disney'. In those days I had a complex about my music and I wanted to change it. So I changed to the music I listen to, and practised writing in different styles. Nevertheless, I have recently found that making my music sound Korean or a bit Asian is my uniqueness. It makes my music stand out among others in the genres that I am rooted in. I want to use this in an appropriate way and take full advantage of it. Now I believe it to be an advantage, not only my musical background, but also that I look Asian. I do not even have to wear intense costumes to be remembered. People remember me because I look Asian. As a musician, it is a good feature that I have no choice but to show.



**Figure 6.6. Grace Kim (courtesy of Grace Kim).**

By the time she graduated from LIPA, Kim found her style was very vocal-oriented. Although she had been singing for a long time, she had never studied this. So, she decided to switch to vocal performance at the Institute of Contemporary Music Performance. She moved her base to London, where she worked closely with the British agencies Hot Vox and Live & Love Music. She also formed a new band, Grace Kim & the Skittles, in addition to her trio, which has more groove and energy. There are eight members, and they play more provocative genres – that is, new and unclassified genres – from bossa nova to math rock.<sup>196</sup> She actively performed in the UK until 2018, but had to return to Korea in 2019 when her visa expired. She continues her career in Korea.

### **1.3.2. Jun Seok De Baek**

Baek is a Korean born DJ, rapper, and music producer in his forties, also known as DJ Seoul Train. He was born in Gangwon province, in the north-eastern region

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<sup>196</sup> A style of rock that has almost no trace of folk or blues, but often with a loose, jazzy-like and spontaneous feeling within the riffs' rigid structure, <http://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=math%20rock>, accessed 8 October 2019.

of South Korea, and was adopted when he was six months old by a family in the Netherlands. He discovered his Korean identity at the age of 16, and since then his interest in Korea has gradually grown, especially after meeting his older brother (who had also been adopted in the Netherlands). He commented that he was fortunate to have had good adopted parents, and received music lessons from an early age. His parents liked listening to music; his mother liked classical and Irish folk music, and his father liked electronic music. Thanks to them, he listened to a wide range of music. He started playing piano at the age of six and was classically trained until 12. However, he then decided to learn jazz improvisation, as classical music was too static for him, and studied until age 18. The piano became his main instrument. Baek listened to hip-hop from when he was eight and it became his favourite genre. When he was 18, he formed a hip-hop group, Young Guns, with two friends. They went to the same international school, but had different backgrounds, being Korean, Ethiopian and Ugandan. Despite this, Baek thought that their voices matched really well. They debuted at a major festival, Racism, in front of 5,000 people. Their English was better than most other groups working in the Netherlands, and in 2002 he joined the band Track Addis playing keyboards, having the biggest success of his musical career so far. In 2003, he started to produce for the band, locking himself in his room for a long time to teach himself how to mix, master, and record. He played with the band for four years, touring all over the Netherlands.

In 2010, he travelled to Korea and met his biological family for the first time. He was the youngest of the three brothers. His parents still lived in the house where he had been born, and the middle son lived in Seoul. He used Google Translate to communicate back and forth with his parents as, at that time, he could not speak any Korean. He talked to his brother in English. He was surprised that his family had deep connections to music, and told me in his interview in June 2018:

One of the biggest shocks was I came from a very musical family. My Korean mum was a singer. We went to a *noraebang* (singing room) together on my first day and I could see her voice was different. And the first thing I saw in my brother's room was his guitar and keyboard. He played guitar, sang, used a bit of keyboards, and my oldest brother



had also been involved in music, although he became a civil servant in the Netherlands. One of my cousins is a rapper in Seoul. It runs in the family. That means so much to me. Everything made so much sense and it was like completing the circle. After I came back to the Netherlands, I felt like a new person.



**Figure 6.7. Jun Seok De Baek (courtesy of Jun Seok De Baek).**

After he returned to Europe, he decided to pursue a career in music. He was working at a five-star hotel as a network administrator to earn a living, having married in 2008. Meeting his biological family rekindled the dying embers of his enthusiasm for music. However, he felt he could no longer develop by himself anymore, so wanted to study audio production. He searched for a school and found Westminster University, which is the only university with an MA in audio production. He visited its open day with his wife and handed in his portfolio. There were over 250 applicants, and only 30 could make it though. He was one of those accepted and started the degree in 2011.

Moving to London, he specifically chose to live in New Malden, where Koreatown is. Since this was after visiting Korea, he thought that if he lived among Koreans, he would feel more connected. When he first visited London, he explored New Malden. He stayed at a guest house and met someone who had a small house to rent while she was away. He lived at that house for three years,

moved to Worcester Park, and now lives near Raynes Park, all close to New Malden. He has had mostly a good experience living there:

I was lucky to meet a person who wanted to rent her house right away when I arrived in New Malden. It was a small annex to a house, but we had our own kitchen and bathroom. It was a great start. When I moved to Worcester Park, the landlord was a very nice North Korean gentleman. Whenever anything was wrong, he came right away and fixed it. He treated us very nicely. So, on the day we left the house, we invited his family for dinner. We still keep in touch, and he often comes to where I work as a DJ.

He has been working as a DJ at a Korean restaurant, Han, in New Malden High Street since 2012. The manager wanted to attract more young people, and turned the building into a bar at night rather than a restaurant. He hired Baek as resident DJ. Baek started DJing every Thursday, Friday, and Saturday between 10pm and 1am. As of 2018, he played only on Fridays. He plays Korean and US hip-hop and R&B, and some UK songs. The place has to be funky, so he plays mostly modern pop. He regards DJing as a good place where he can practice for when bigger gigs come along. He played at the after-party for DJ Elo and DJ Pumkin's party in Camden in 2017. That show sold out and 75 percent of the audience stayed for the after-party. He told me it was the coolest gig he has been to in the UK. He has also been invited to DJ at several Korean events, including Taste of Korea and Korean Cultural Evening. He was supposed to play at Kingston Welcomes Korea, but had to cancel due to circumstances beyond his control. Instead, he invited people who had bought tickets to Han, and 20 came along.

In 2013, he decided to study further for a PhD in Ethnomusicology at SOAS. He submitted a proposal linking jazz, hip-hop and *samulnori*, which was accepted, but he had to drop out due to a financial issue. In 2016, he met one of the SOAS staff, who advised him to do a MMus first, as he did not have the necessary academic background. For his MMus he researched *daseureum* (prelude) comparing it to bossa nova, and learned *samulnori*. He finished the MMus in 2019. Considering his musical pathway from jazz piano, through hip-hop and producing to traditional Korean music, everything seems highly disparate, yet he sees it in

terms of a clear logical progression. I asked what kind of music he wants to pursue, and what music means to him:

I noticed that in the Dutch hip-hop scene, both Black and White people were excluding me. Mostly, people would listen to my music and say, 'This is cool'. But when they found out it's me, they said "This is you? Really?" It was a kind of cultural marginalisation. That's why I became more like an activist, both as a DJ and MC. I think Talib Kweli would be a good example for me, because his music is activism-based. This is how I choose to express my feeling in a hip-hop way. And it's all in my recent piece, 'Normal Yellow Face'. I know I'm not Korean enough, obviously not Western enough even though fully Westernised. But music is still a part of my being. Finding out that I'm from a musical family was a trigger for me to keep learning music. Learning ethnomusicology makes me feel I am in touch with myself, my Korean heritage. I'm trying to find a connection between different genres – it's like finding me, myself.

## **2. Amateur musicians**

### **2.1. Song Dayena**

Song is British born teenage girl who lives in the London suburbs with her parents and a younger brother. Her father came to the UK in 1994 to learn English, and her mother followed in 1996. He got a job at a Korean travel agency in New Malden, as he used to work in this industry in Korea. The initial plan was to return back to Korea after a few years, but this was not possible due to the financial crisis of 1997 and the birth of their first child, Song. Like many other Korean mothers, who make their children learn Western music as it is considered to have prestige, Song's mother was eager to teach it to her children. However, she also had another reason for doing so, since as a Korean living in the UK, she knew that Western music skills would be a great advantage when seeking admittance to private schools. Song and her brother studied classical instruments from an early age. Song began the piano when she was five, and cello from the age of six.

As an immigrant family, Song's mother was keen to teach Korean culture, so showed them many documentaries, sent them to the London Korean School

and took them to Korea during school holidays at least once a year. When Song was seven, her mother showed her a documentary about Korean twins playing the *gayageum*. It was Song's first introduction to the zither and she was fascinated by it; it sounded so different to any Western instruments with which she was familiar. She asked her mother to find a way she could learn the *gayageum* in London – this was the first instrument she had asked to learn. Luckily, they found a teacher and she began to learn in 2010. Although she discontinued with other instruments, having reached Grade 8, she does keep learning the *gayageum*. She can play various traditional and contemporary pieces. In July 2016, I asked her which her favourite *gayageum* piece was:

My favourite piece is '*Chulgang*' because it's more a fun type of music for me. I can play *sanjo*, but it starts in slow and takes a long time to complete a piece. However, '*Chulgang*' is more fun and faster in terms of its rhythm and melody. Also, I enjoy playing the 25-stringed *gayageum* more than the 12-stringed one, because I can show people more cool stuff with wider scales and various skills.

'*Chulgang*' is a familiar piece in South Korea, more for the *geomungo* (six-stringed zither with frets), although the original was composed by Kim Yong-sil in North Korea. Kim was once the head of composition at the Pyongyang University of Music and Dance, and studied under the renowned *sanjo* specialist An Ki-ok (1894-1974). His piece depicts people working at a smelting factory in Heungnam, South Hamgyong Province. Composed for the *geomungo* at first, it is only played by the *gayageum* in North Korea these days because the *geomungo* has been officially abandoned. However, Ha Jun-hong, a Korean Japanese enthusiast, obtained the score and a tape from North Korea, and passed these to the South Korean *geomungo* virtuoso Lee Se-hwan in 1994. Thereafter, it was performed by the *geomungo* music ensemble Kum-yul-ak-hoe in 1995 for the first time in South Korea, and has since been performed and recorded several times, as well as being rearranged for the 25-stringed *gayageum*.

Song also plays several pieces for the 25-stringed *gayageum* including '*Ulsan agassi*/A lady from Ulsan' and '*Doraji*/Bellflower'. I asked her how she felt about playing a Korean instrument in the UK:

Playing a traditional Korean instrument as a second-generation Korean immigrant makes me feel special. I have many opportunities to perform in various places such as at charity fairs, festivals and embassy events, which are unique and rare opportunities considering my age. I have performed many times as a soloist as well as playing with my teacher in duets. I think these opportunities have been a great way to build my confidence as a performer, and I am so pleased and proud that I can present Korean culture to British people.

In daily life, she used to listen to Western pop songs even though her mother played classical music in the car and at home, and made her listen. Recently, however, she was introduced to K-pop by friends, and since then this is all she listens to. It is not only because she likes the melodies and general style, but K-pop allows her to become closer to her Korean friends and feel closer to Korean teenage culture. By going to and enjoying a K-pop concert or singing songs together, she is also able to relate to her teenage cousins in Korea on her visits.

She attended a private school, and this afforded the rare opportunity of learning all kinds of music from medieval through African drumming to film music. She also had chances to make music with others in the class. In the 2017 academic year, she started her GCSEs<sup>197</sup> and played in the school orchestra. She considers these activities practical and valuable in building her experience. Despite her talent, she plans to continue music only as a hobby, since she ultimately wants to become a doctor:

By playing *gayageum*, I can relieve my stress and retain my link to traditional Korean culture as an overseas Korean. While living in the UK, I was hardly ever given the opportunity to learn or experience Korean culture. However, since I began to play the *gayageum*, I could learn more about traditional music and culture, gain opportunities to showcase Korean culture in public, and get along with other Koreans better as a member of the community. Thus, I will not give up playing *gayageum*.

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<sup>197</sup> The examinations taken by 15/16 years olds to mark the end of Key Stage 4 in secondary education in England, Northern Ireland and Wales, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/levels/z98jmp3>, accessed 20 February 2020.

## 2.2. Byun Ye-eun

Byun is in her 30s. She escaped North Korea in 1999, but was caught by the Chinese public security forces and sent back. If someone gets caught trying to escape, he/she is considered a political prisoner and is sent to special re-education prison camps so-called *gyohwaso*. In the camp, she endured horrible torture that she does not want to recall. In spite of this, she did not give up, and kept trying to escape. After two failed attempts, she finally arrived in the UK in 2008 via China and South Korea. As soon as she arrived, she was sent to Liverpool under the refugee resettlement policy. By then, she had given birth to two children in South Korea, and gave birth to a third in Liverpool. She had a hard time in Liverpool due to her limited English skills. She had to go to hospital several times with her children, but could not communicate well. Although the hospital provided an interpreter on the phone, it did not work. So, she decided to move to New Malden, and, like other North Korean refugees, settled there in summer 2012.

In 2013, she began to teach Korean gospel songs and dance routines once a week at the University of the Third-Age for Koreans (UTAK), although she never studied music formally. She has always been interested in music, but could not take music classes in North Korea due to her status: education opportunities in the North are not equal to all, but are allocated according to one's social status and are utilised to reproduce inequality. North Koreans are classified into 51 groups within a three-tier system, and receive compulsory education for 11 years from pre-school to secondary education. However, higher education is restricted to certain classes with strict qualifications (Y.K. Kim 1987, 202-208), and was not available to Byun. She started music study when she arrived in China through Christian activity. I interviewed her in July 2016:

I was really having a hard time in China, as I got caught and sent back to North Korea many times. At that time, I encountered Christianity for the first time. I received not only practical help from missionaries but also found religious faith and as a result I became a Christian, naturally. I learned Christian music such as hymns and Korean gospel songs. Faith was a great comfort to me while I was on the run, and

singing hymns, especially, gave me the strength to endure the hard times.

The UTAK provided several classes and activities which included English communication, music and crafts, and Byun took a class as a volunteer. She usually taught a hymn with simple body movements, believing this could give the elderly energy and vigour. Many North Korean seniors attended the UTAK, and many either had lost their families while escaping North Korea or left families behind. As a refugee with painful experiences, she told me that she regarded the elderly attending her class as if they were her parents. She added that she was happy to empathise with them and help heal them internally through music. She worked as a volunteer every week for a long time, until the UTAK closed in 2018 due to the poor health of its director.

As a mother, now of five children, she is keen to teach music to her children. She used to organise group lessons in violin, including her children and inviting a teacher. However, this did not last long due to the economic difficulties faced by some students. She was unable to afford private tuition for all her five children, so depends on after school activities. On top of this, she searches and takes her children to all available events in town. In fact, I have met her and her children many times at music concerts. She believes that although her children cannot learn to play instruments at the moment, giving them experiences will have a beneficial influence in the future. Besides music, Byun has been struggling to teach Korean to her children, much as have other Korean immigrant parents. As a music enthusiast, she knows how helpful children's songs are for studying the language and Korean sentiments, yet she lacks knowledge of such songs. Apart from Christian songs, most of the songs she knows are related to North Korean political ideology, which she does not want to teach. She uses the South Korean TV programme *Hangeuri yaho* (Hurray Korean!) as a medium to teach the language to her children, and particularly the Korean alphabet song, '*Ganada song*' which features on the programme.

### **2.3. Yim Hyung-soo**

Yim is a chef in his 40s who came to London in 1995 to study English. He planned to go back to Korea after one year but changed his mind and decided to study

French cooking and baking at Le Cordon Bleu, a culinary and hospitality school. He had studied hotel catering at Gangneung Yeongdong University in Korea and majored in Japanese cuisine before coming to London, so wanted to study Western culinary culture. After graduating from Le Cordon Bleu, he went to the University of West London to study hospitality management in 1997, yet had to leave after two years due to financial problems. He joined a Japanese franchise, Yo! Sushi, as a chef, and received a working visa with the company's help. He has worked there for the last 11 years. He lived on Finchley Road for the first four years due to its transport and accessibility to central London. He moved to Tottenham in 1999 as he wanted to buy his own house before his first child was born. He lived there until his child entered primary school, then moved to New Malden for better education available for children. Since then, he has been living in New Malden as a member of the Korean immigrant community.

While learning English in 1996, one of his Korean friends introduced him to her classmate, Baek Hae-sook. They often hung out together, having dinner and watching musicals. One day, Hae-sook invited them to her house for dinner and Yim saw her *gayageum*. He was not aware that Hae-sook was *gayageum* professor at Pusan National University in South Korea, staying in London for a sabbatical year. He claimed he had had a desire to learn the *gayageum* in his heart for a long time, but had not had the chance, and asked professor Baek to teach him while she was in London. From then on, he went to her house to play whenever he had time. The first piece he learned was 'Arirang', and he still has the handwritten notation by his teacher. For six months he also learned a contemporary piece composed by Hwang Byung-ki (1936-2018) called 'Sup/the Forest', and an abridged version of the Gang Tae-hong *gayageum sanjo* school. In Richmond in October 2018, he told me:

I didn't have enough time learning the *gayageum* from her because there was only six months left until she left London. So, I spent a lot of time at her house practising the *gayageum*. At that time, I did not know even if it was out of tune when I was practising, because I was a complete beginner. But rather than teaching me folksongs, I was learning professional pieces, so I had to practise hard. She also taught me the tuning of the instrument, because when she left, I had to take



care of the instrument myself. So, I had to repeat tying and untying the strings several times. Thanks to this intense training, I will never forget how to take care of the *gayageum*.

After professor Baek left, Yim could not learn the *gayageum* for 17 years, as it was difficult to find a teacher who suited him well in London. He continued to practice by himself at home, then in 2013, he was able to pick up the skill again at the Korean Community Centre through the *gayageum* class offered by UTAK. He learned to play folksongs with the *gayageum*, which he had hardly been able to learn before that. He mentioned that he usually plays folksongs when he feels depressed and *sanjo* before he goes to bed as a form of meditation. Since learning as a member of the group, he has performed at several venues. In fact, he is both the youngest member and the only person in the group who knows how to properly tune the *gayageum*, and he always helps with the tuning of elderly members' instruments, carrying their instruments to and from performances. However, he tends not to participate at Korean events these days due to bad experiences in the past – he complains about the poor support and low respect for performers at several events:

In the past, professional Korean musicians have visited London for a concert. After they finished their concert in London, they came to the Korean festival in New Malden and performed in order to help the event. However, the organiser did not even offer them a dressing room, so they had to change their costume in the car. Even worse, when they appeared on stage, the presenter said '*gisaengdeul wanne!*' (Courtesans have arrived!). I could not lift my head, out of shame. I also have performed with the *gayageum* group members at the Korean festival. However, the organiser showed a contemptuous attitude toward us as we were amateurs, and all of us felt very bad.

Since then, I decided not to play anymore at Korean festivals.

In addition to playing the *gayageum*, he has also participated in diverse cultural activities. He has been a member of the Youn Hwa Sa Samulnori Team at the Korean Buddhist temple in Kingston since it was established in 2016. When a dance class started in 2017 at the UTAK, he began to learn traditional dance, which he had previously never imagined he would do. He also joined the SOAS

Korean Dance Society and performed with its members. Since the Korean Senior Centre opened in 2018, he has volunteered as head of traditional music at the centre. I was curious as to why he has engaged in such activities:

I did not become interested in music to make money and have never thought about this, because I am not a professional musician. I'm the youngest of the ensemble members who actively participates in cultural activities at the centre, and you cannot leave the responsibility of running the centre to the elderly, can you? Doing cultural activities is a big pleasure for me. I am the kind of person who gives up quickly if it is boring. However, I play musical instruments because it is fun, and I volunteer for the elderly because they remind me of my parents in South Korea. I also hope to keep traditional Korean music groups alive in this community.

I asked what playing music means to him:

Music is what keeps me going. I am especially happy that I can play the *gayageum* when I feel tired and depressed. Despite having a hard time due to a divorce, playing the *gayageum* has been a great consolation and gives me respite. Regardless of my performance technique, I feel my anger and loneliness go away while playing. Although I am busy earning a living, I hope to devote myself to playing the *gayageum* after retirement.

#### **2.4. Son Ho-ja**

Son is in her 50s and came to the UK in 1996. She was born in Jeju, South Korea, but spent most of her 20s in Japan studying fashion design. After finishing her studies, she came to the UK curious about Western culture and wanting to learn English. After a year in London, she decided to stay another year, and finally her husband followed her, moving from Korea to the UK in 1998. Until then, she had not planned to stay for such a long time, but decided to settle down when she had a baby. Son and her husband have worked in various fields. When pregnant, she ran a guest house renting out spare rooms in her house. It was a period when backpacking in Europe was popular among Korean university students. She also received Japanese guests, as she speaks Japanese. She could make a reasonable

income. At that time, her husband started to work at a Japanese restaurant, while still studying English. After a few years, the two took on the running of a Japanese hair salon in Chinatown, and ran it for a few years. In 2007, they changed and began to run a restaurant near the British Museum, which they have done ever since.

Despite being busy with the restaurant, she has actively participated in learning music, dance and language. In her interview in May 2018, she told me that her passion for learning comes from her background:

I was born on Jeju Island, South Korea. I think I have always had a desire to learn something, but it was not easy for me as I lived in a remote area. If I found any chance to learn something in Jeju, I did not hesitate but went for it. Learning the *daegeum* (Korean flute) was a case in point. When I was a university student, I found a *daegeum* player by chance, who had stayed in Jeju for a while, and learned the basic skills for a month. After coming to the UK, I found an advertisement about *daegeum* lessons in a Korean newspaper when I was expecting a baby. I could learn only for a month as I need to give birth, but I was really happy that I could learn *daegeum* again after a long break.

Son has participated in several cultural activities organised in the Korean community, although she does not live in the Kingston area. She has been learning the *gayageum* since 2013 with other Koreans, and started to learn traditional dance in 2017 at UTAK. Since 2018, she has been learning *pansori* with two other people, yet she is the only one who has continued. As a member of the Arirang Gayageum Ensemble and London Korean Dance Team, she has actively performed for a few years. Apart from Korean cultural activities, she has learned Latin dance at the Korean Community Centre (organised by the Korean Women's Association in the UK), and Zumba dance at the Korean Seniors' Centre. I was curious why, and she answered:

Basically, I like learning something new, but the main reason for me to participate in these activities are for fun. Not only activities related to Korean culture, but other cultures as well. I used to learn ballroom dancing at the community centre in Clapham Junction with British

people, but it was not my cup of tea as it always required a partner to dance with. This was the reason I gave up. I knew that when I learn something for the first time, it might not be fun, but it becomes more and more interesting over time. Also, I think the opportunity to learn Korean culture is a very important matter, especially for overseas Koreans. It's not easy to find Korean music and dance teachers outside of Korea, but I have them here right now, luckily.

Her husband supports her in her cultural activities, though he is not interested in them. Rather, her son has greater interest, and watches Son's *gayageum* and dance practicing at home. Since he is a second-generation Korean, Hoja was keen to teach him Korean language and culture. She used to send him to the London Korean School, but her son left the school when he found the curriculum too difficult to follow. She found a private Korean tutor for him and tried to visit Korea with him every holiday. Thanks to her efforts, her son is bilingual, and is comfortable both with British and Korean culture. Most of all, she does not see any cultural difference in him.

I don't have any specific goals for my activities, but just try to do my best with what I can do. Performing on stage is not my goal, but I'm trying to participate as much as I can because it gives me some motivation and I know my skills improve a lot preparing for a performance. These activities are just a part of my life. Also, I value moments and chances, so if I have another chance to learn something new, I would definitely do so.

## **2.5. Park Rae-seung**

Park (a.k.a Ray Park) turned 60 in 2019. He came to the UK in 2001 as an employee of Samsung and worked for that company for eight years. His family joined him in 2002. In 2009, he was meant to return to the head office in Korea, but his family wanted to stay in the UK for educational reasons. So, he made a big change: he resigned from the company and started a real estate business. As a Christian, Park has been attending a Korean church, Hanbit Gyohoe, for a long time, and was a member of its choir for 18 years. His wife is still a member of the women's choir and participates in the rehearsal every Monday. His son is in his

twenties, and leads the music team in God's Visions Church, another Korean church in central London. They have not pushed him to do this, but Park thinks that he and his wife's choir activities might have influenced him.

He has been president of the UK branch of the Duranno Father School since 2016. This is a registered corporation established by a Korean church, the Onnuri Gyohoe, in 1995. Although open to the public, it used to have only Christian members, but non-Christians began to join after the Korean financial crisis in 1997. The school offers two programmes, a Saturday Father School for Christians and an Open Father School for non-Christians. The programme consists of five-week seminars covering father's influence, manhood, mission, spirituality, and the family. As of 2017, over 360,000 people have completed the programme worldwide. There are two branches in the UK; one in London set up in 2005 and another in Milton Keynes set up in 2017.<sup>198</sup> As president of the UK branches, he organises the programme. One day, he realised that there was no opportunity for participants to connect with each other after they finish the course, so he asked what their preferred everyday activities were. Most answered that they enjoyed the choir. This is not surprising, as listening to and participating in a choir is common for Korean Christians. So, he organised the Korean Fathers' Quartet in 2017. I asked him in October 2018 about the choir:

I didn't have any specific plans or aims when I organised the choir. Singing praise can be only for oneself as it heals one internally and leads one to spiritual awakening. However, I believe it is more meaningful when it echoes around and when people come together. Although no members are professionally trained, all of us love singing hymns. We had a concert last week at a very small church in the countryside of the UK. Regardless of the size of the performance and the number of the audience, it meant a lot to us as the audience liked our performances so much.

Thirteen people have joined, yet only seven are regular members. All members attend different churches and are connected to the school. They gather once a week and have a rehearsal for two to three hours. They used to rehearse at a

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<sup>198</sup> <http://www.father.or.kr/index.action>, accessed 16 October 2018.

Korean church, but moved to the Korean Seniors' Centre in 2018 when it opened. Since no members have professional training, they invite two people who do to their rehearsals: Byun Youngkee, a missionary, leads and conducts and Bark Nayoung accompanies on the piano. Byun has divided the choir into tenors, baritones and basses.

On 6 October 2018, the choir held their first concert, organising jointly with a Korean women's choir, Esther Lady's Singers. There were 20 performers in total; seven from the Korean Fathers' Quartet, 10 from the Esther Lady's Singers, a violinist, a conductor and a pianist. The programme divided into opening and final pieces by the two choirs, a violin solo, and separate sets by Esther Lady's Trio and the Korean Fathers' Quartet in the middle. Mostly, they sang in English; only the first song, '*Gamsahae*/Thank you Lord', was in Korean. They usually practise in both Korean and English, but decided to perform in English because they expected most of the audience would be British people. I asked about the choir again:

Carrying on an amateur music group is not an easy task at all because it is not for making money so can always come behind making one's living. However, fortunately, the choir has been running very well for over a year. I don't have any specific plan for the future, but I believe if we just do as we do now, the choir will develop gradually. Our singing skill is also improving through practice and performance. I hope the choir will have at least 15 regular members and could perform at anytime and anywhere in the future.

## **2.6. Ji Su-mi**

Ji<sup>199</sup> is in her 70s and comes from North Korea. It is mandatory in North Korea to join organisations such as *Joseon Sonyeondan* (Juvenile organisation), *Cheongnyeondan* (Youth organisation), and Joseon Rodongdang (Worker's Party), and when she was a member of the youth organisation, she used to play a Western bass drum, performing in parades for general meetings. After finishing military service, she joined the Worker's Party, which she was automatically

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<sup>199</sup> An alias is used to maintain personal security.

affiliated to due to serving in the military and learned the *janggu* double headed hourglass-shaped drum. She used to play *janggu* as part of a group in festivals, or in events for workers and farmers, as she told me in her interview in July 2016:

I have really liked music since youth. If someone asked me about my future hopes, I always answered that I wanted to be a musician, although I have never formally studied music. When I was a student, musical instruments were rare, and there were only a few reed organs, big Western drums, and *sogos* (small hand drum) at my school. When there was a musical event, such as a singing contest, I played the drum in the first row. Apart from percussion instruments, I always wanted to learn a melodic instrument. However, I could not learn any or attend a music school due to my status. Educational opportunities are not equally available, only allocated in accordance with one's social status. When I was 12, I visited my uncle's house in Hamheung during the summer holiday. I visited the Hamheung Art School. I still remember that I was very jealous of the students, because I was not able to attend the school myself.

She escaped North Korea in 2003. Her two daughters escaped before her, but her son had to remain as he was in the army (which is mandatory for 13 years). She eventually arrived in the UK in 2006 via China, Thailand, and South Korea, having endured a very difficult journey. On the way to the UK, she suffered from severe depression as she was not able to contact her daughters for more than three years, and this eventually caused a speech defect to develop. After arriving in the UK, she began to attend a Korean church. Although she was neither familiar with Christianity nor religion, she was nonetheless able to socialise with other Koreans and felt a sense of belonging. During worship, she felt pleasure and felt blessed to be singing hymns in Korean. At the church, she was able to learn how to read notation and how to play the piano from one of the missionaries. It meant a great deal to her, as for a long time she had yearned to learn a melodic instrument. From then on, her speech impediment became less pronounced.

In 2011, she met Jung Ji-eun, the only *gayageum* player living in New Malden at the time, and began to learn from her. She bought a *gayageum* from South Korea with the help of her teacher and learned a few folksongs such as

'*Arirang*', '*Doraji*/Bellflower', and '*Gunbam taryeong*/Chestnut song'. In the end, she stopped lessons due to financial constraints, although she did keep practising every day. Fortunately, she could resume learning *gayageum* at the UTAK in 2013. She wanted to share her positive experiences playing the instrument, and persuaded some of her friends to join her. The teacher helped them buy instruments from Korea and they gathered once a week, learning folksongs and Christian hymns with the *gayageum* for a year. Unfortunately, the teacher had to leave in 2014 but, despite the absence of a teacher, Ji and others tried to keep the group going, practising at each member's house in turn. I asked what playing the *gayageum* meant to her:

Playing the *gayageum* entirely changed my life. It was a remedy for my homesickness, to get over the depression and change my mind in a positive way. Many elderly Koreans find themselves in depression as they feel their life is meaningless. However, I can get along with others by playing the *gayageum*, and can do something meaningful. I am very proud of playing the *gayageum*, especially when I present traditional music to British people. Also, I believe it is good for my health because I need to keep moving my fingers and through reading music scores, I use my brain. On top of that, I feel a sense of accomplishment every time I finish a song.

When she is at home, Ji enjoys not only folksongs, but also other Korean songs like *trot* songs. I spotted a small portable *karaoke* machine at her house, which listed over 6,500 Korean songs from traditional folksongs to recent pop. She told me that her South Korean friend had given it to her as a present. Even though she does not know many of the songs on the machine, she can sing any after listening a few times.

One day, I had chance to join a lunch with around 20 elderly Koreans alongside Ji. Three-quarters of them were from North Korea. After lunch, they moved to a *karaoke* room at the back of the restaurant, and sang songs. I was surprised to see them sing *trot*, and recent songs. I asked how they knew the songs and they said they had heard them on Korean television shows and from South Korean friends. Thanks to the development of the Internet, they can easily access up-to-date Korean culture, even though they live far away from Korea.



They said they are more accustomed to listening to *trot* than British songs, and they are more comfortable with Korean lyrics, melodies and rhythm. Many may assume that North Korean refugees do not listen to or sing any North Korean songs. However, most, including Ji, still sing some North Korean songs. These are not songs related to ideology, but are rather folksongs arranged to fit ideology and the new vocalisation. They also watch North Korean music video clips on YouTube, which would be absolutely impossible if they lived in South Korea due to a prohibition by the southern government. Once, Ji showed me a clip of a folksong with the 22-stringed North Korean *gayageum*. The piece was '*Bada-ui norae*/Song of the sea,' and apparently it was the same folksong as '*Baennorae*/Fishing song' known in South Korea. In fact, it does originate from the Gangwon province folksong '*Baennori*/Boat game' (O.-S. Kwon 2006, 249). Ji told me, 'I wish I could play like that. That is my goal'.

### **3. Chinese and Japanese professional musicians in London**

Because of the long history of Chinese and Japanese diasporas, a number of UK-based professional musicians from the two communities have engaged in a large variety of music activities. They have not only made efforts to maintain their own ethnic identities through such activities, but have pioneered new cultural landscapes as they have mixed the old with new. This mix is evident in the more well established Asian American communities, and Su Zheng explains it with the observation that 'immigrant musicians have to adopt their craft to the host country's cultural structure and see their music defined by the host country's needs and perceptions' (2010, 249). Through observing the activities of Chinese and Japanese professional musicians in London, I have begun to discover how such musicians have found themselves and have been able to put themselves on the map while living in a new place far from home.

The first musicians I will look at are the duo, the Frank Chickens, a pop-orientated group founded in 1982 by two Japanese women living in London, Kazuko Hohki and Kazumi Taguchi. They met each other at the London Musician's Collective, a venue for improvisation, and decided to form their group to challenge the stereotyped images of Japanese culture as deeply different from European culture, and of Japanese women as submissive. Since they did not have

their own songs at the beginning, they took the *karaoke* concept and used backing tapes to cover Japanese pop tunes such as Shizuko Kasai's 'Tokyo Boogie-Woogie'. Working with the producers Steve Beresford and David Toop, they wrote songs and released two albums, 'We are Frank Chickens' in 1985 and 'Get Chickenized' in 1987. According to Taguchi,<sup>200</sup> their music can be defined as 'rock and Western-style pop music' often mixed with Japanese folksongs or children's songs to demonstrate Japanese identity. They performed for five years, until Taguchi left in 1987 to pursue academic studies, re-joining in 2013.

The duo consider themselves London-based, since they have usually performed in the British music art scene, promoting their music through the British media from their inception. British audiences also saw them as local. Taguchi told me how the Japanese community regarded them as a foreign group:

We made a TV programme with a production team from London Weekend Television called 'South of Watford' in the 1980s. One of the ideas in this production was that we performed to Japanese workers and the families of Japanese Companies in Milton Keynes. A strange experience for me was that Japanese people laughed when we sang a Japanese ballad called 'Sake Ballad' which was sung in Japan by the queen of *enka*, Misora Hibari. I think it was a strange and funny experience for them seeing punk-type women singing *enka*, although we were serious. Another experience happened when we went to Japan in 1985. We signed for RCA Records to promote our first album 'We are Frank Chickens' and the record company categorised our group as a foreign act. I realised then that we were considered to be foreign musicians although we were Japanese.

Frank Chickens have released five albums to date. 'We Are Ninja' proved to be a great hit, the video on YouTube having over 200k views by November 2019. They have performed worldwide, including at the Glastonbury Festival, at the Limelight Club in New York, and at the Sydney Trade Union Club. Suzanne Moore from *The Guardian* praised them, writing, 'The superb Frank Chickens, who are ageless but as barmy as hell. And still total ninjas!'<sup>201</sup> They still perform in London,

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<sup>200</sup> Email correspondence, 13 January 2019.

<sup>201</sup> *The Guardian*, 4 June 2011.

now, rather than as a duo, with around 20 members, although 37 individuals have been involved since the group formed. They have no conditional requirements for joining, and the group has become more multicultural over time, featuring members from a number of ethnic backgrounds. The London-based professional *shamisen* (Japanese three-stringed lute) player Hibiki Ichikawa regularly performs with the group at live performances, and since 2016, a few members have organised the annual Ura Matsuri (literally, ‘alternative festival’), presenting and promoting alternative Japanese culture to UK-based audiences. In March 2019, I attended Ura Matsuri being held at Bethnal Green Working Mens Club. The club was totally full, mostly with non-East Asians, for a programme that lasted three hours. It was easy to understand why they call their music ‘alternative’, as they showcased costumes, video, dance, as well as music.



**Figure 6.8. Frank Chickens performing at Ura Matsuri in 2019 (photo by the author).**

Hibiki Ichikawa is the only London-based professional player of *tsugaru shamisen* – a three-stringed lute played with a plectrum originating from the Japanese Tsugaru peninsula. He came to the UK in 2011 to study English and pursue a musical career.<sup>202</sup> His first UK event was the ‘J-Triangle’ concert in 2012. He normally has at least two to three performances every month,<sup>203</sup> offering what

<sup>202</sup> Email correspondence, 12 February 2019.

<sup>203</sup> <http://www.hibikishamisen.com/index.html>, accessed 18 November 2019.

he states is a 70 percent traditional and 30 percent contemporary mix (including his own compositions). He has released two albums, *Shamazing*, released in 2012 with seven folksong arrangements, three of his own pieces, and a piece by a Japanese collaborator, and *Shami-sensational*, released in 2016, with four of his own compositions, three folksong arrangements, and one piece by another Japanese composer. He sometimes collaborates with others, in pieces such as 'Electric' with guitarist Simon Leong, and 'Chemical Elements' with dancer Jamie Gong. Since 2013, he has taught and run workshops throughout the UK, expanding to Germany in 2015. He normally works with around 20 students, split evenly between Japanese and non-Japanese. Since 2014, he has organised concerts every year for his students, and he encourages his students to perform in public, sometimes in ensemble with him. His private students provide him enough money to maintain his life in the UK, but his main difficulty has been with maintaining a visa. He had to leave for Japan when his Exceptional Talent visa expired in 2019, but was recently, and fortunately, given permanent resident status.



**Figure 6.9. Hibiki Ichikawa (middle) performing with his students at Ura Matsuri in 2019 (photo by the author).**



**Figure 6.10. Cheng Yu's performance flyer (author's collection).**

Moving to the Chinese community, Cheng Yu is a particularly well-known Chinese *pipa* (four-stringed lute) and *guqin* (seven-stringed plucked zither) virtuoso who occupies a central place in London's Chinese musical activities. She came to London in the early 1990s and received MMus and PhD degrees in ethnomusicology from SOAS.<sup>204</sup> She is the co-founder of all three Chinese ensembles discussed above, the UK Chinese Ensemble, London Youlan *Qin* Society (of which she is president), and the Silk String Quartet. Unlike traditional musicians in China, she, like others in the UK, must play all genres – traditional, modern, as well as cross-cultural projects – with non-Chinese musicians. Having done this for other musicians and promoters for many years, in 2017 she organised the Flowing Water Ensemble, the first mixed orchestra in the UK featuring Chinese and Western instruments, with 22 professional musicians. The ensemble debuted at the Hackney Empire Theatre, sponsored privately, to celebrate the 45th anniversary of diplomatic relationships between Britain and the People's Republic of China. However, the orchestra failed to find a rehearsal space and lacked funding to continue. Cheng Yu considers the Chinese music scene in the UK is still under-represented considering the size of the diaspora,

<sup>204</sup> Email correspondence, 1 December 2018.



although at times the UK government sponsors it. Performances are occasional, seasonal, and event-driven, rather than being part of a mainstream or part of state education. Her goal is to raise the profile of Chinese music by encouraging young British Chinese to learn and promote it in schools, communities and universities, and at festivals and in concert venues.

#### **4. Discussion**

I have explored the story of 13 professional and six amateur Korean musicians who actively take part in music-making in London. I have found similarities and differences in their attitudes and experiences which can be summarised in three ways. Firstly, each Korean traditional musician differs in their personal pathway, reflecting their interests and opportunities. Choi Jeung-hyun has greater concern for the transmission of traditional music, while Jung Ji-eun and Kim Hyelim focus more on their own music making. Lee Eunseog, as a second-generation immigrant, tries to seek out and express his Korean identity in his music by utilising traditional musical elements. It is clear that traditional musicians living away from Korea face many challenges. Due to the physical distance from the home country, it is difficult to procure materials for new instruments or to repair instruments when strings break or wood splits. I discovered this when one day I heard a buzzing sound from my *gayageum* zither while I was practising, but I could not figure out what was wrong. If I had been in Korea, I would have gone to an instrument shop immediately, but it was impossible to do this in Britain, so I called the maker in Korea to seek advice. Taking their advice and after numerous attempts, I was able to fix the instrument myself. I have also seen members of Arirang Gayageum Ensemble tie together broken strings on their instruments because they do not have spare strings to use as replacements. Traditionally *gayageum* strings are made of silk, which easily break, but many players use synthetic strings these days. The limited number of performers playing traditional music is also a matter of concern, as it limits the selection of music that can be performed. Music such as the traditional piece *sinawi* requires several instrumentalists to work together, each demonstrating their individual skills, as the music is based on variation and improvisation. But such a piece can rarely be

performed in London unless professional performers who play a greater variety of instruments come visiting.

Secondly, Korean expert musicians in Western classical music follow completely different trajectories to each other and to those working with traditional music, based on their experience and background. Yu Byung-Yun has led an orchestra for a long time, and his performances with the orchestra lift the spirits of local people; Hong teaches violin to Korean children in Koreatown and performs at church every Sunday. As a member of the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Yu Sulki actively performs on national and international stages. The four Korean students at the Royal Academy have found their own ways to acquire valid experiences. Aware of prejudice against Asian musicians, they try hard to break through as Korean musicians performing on the international stage. Thirdly, the two pop musicians I have discussed have totally different backgrounds to each other and to the other musicians I have considered: Grace Kim grew up in Korea, but moved to the UK to follow her dreams, while Jun Seok De Baek grew up in the Netherlands adopted by European parents and moved to the UK as part of a journey to find his roots. Their different backgrounds ensure their music is different, and their activities are the result of factors which, although different, have much in common with other musicians across the globe, where decisions are 'made by individuals on the basis of their experience of music and attitudes to different social contexts' (Blacking 1995, 160). Indeed, individual music-making is very private and is part of one's personal identity.

Lastly, amateurs participate in music in everyday life because it offers benefits to them as individuals, and this is much as Stephanie Pitts has noted (2005, 10). The stories of the six musicians featured here with Korean ethnicity illustrate how each participates and each can (and does) employ music in different ways. For Song Dayena, playing the *gayageum* is a way to embrace her cultural roots on top of her British identity, since because, and as Thomas Turino has noted in a broader context, music is an important source for realising personal and collective identities (1999, 221). Likewise, Byun Ye-eun and Park Rae-seung not only reinforce their Christian identity through music, but also use it to link with other Korean Christians. This confirms Hallam's comment that music is a means of achieving well-being, hence musical engagement can be

beneficial both to psychological and physical health (2015, 16). Son Hoja, Yim Hyung-soo, and Ji Su-mi are cases in point, since music helps them, at least so far as they have it, to live healthier lives and to remain self-motivated. In Ji Su-mi's case, music heals traumatic memories and physical impediments. This is much as music has been found to comfort refugees with painful memories, as with the Vietnamese in the United States (Reyes 1999) or Tibetans in India (Diehl 2002). It can indeed, as Stokes notes, be used 'as a means of transcending the limitations of our own place in the world, of constructing trajectories rather than boundaries across space' (1994, 4). Through music, both professional and amateur Korean musicians create and experience their world beyond any physical restraints.

All the professional musicians from the three communities I have discussed here point out in common that visas are the biggest concern for them, and for all diasporic musicians, in the UK. Obtaining the right to remain and work in the country is considered to be becoming harder, the more so because of Brexit, and it is a requirement that all foreign musicians have a legitimate working visa in order to legally engage in musical activities in the country. Although the Exceptional Talent visa can be obtained by a small number of foreign artists, it is for a limited residence period, and its selection criteria are not explicit, so it is considered to be difficult to prepare and apply for. A musician working in Britain as part of a diaspora often has to go back to his/her country due to visa issues, even after establishing a musical base in the country. This is certainly an obstacle for the growth of the music scene within Britain's diaspora communities, and, more widely, it hinders the promotion of musical diversity. When any musician from the three East Asian communities I have considered has to leave the UK, it is almost impossible to find a substitute for them, whether as a performer or as a teacher. They are significant individuals. They act as the guardians of East Asian cultural heritage in a foreign land.

While all East Asian musicians in London could be considered alongside each other due to shared cultural roots, their ethnic identifiers are distinct depending on which diaspora they represent, as are their musical activities. They need to keep negotiating their national identity, much as Befu has written: 'national identity is not a fixed form, but continually in the remaking to fit the needs of the creators and consumers' (1993, 5). In the case of East Asian diasporic



musicians, not only national identity, but individual musical identity also keeps changing, combining old homes with the new home, adapting to the tastes and needs of their new audiences. As they perpetually recreate their identity, they express it through music, eventually manifesting it as *interculture* (after Slobin's term). These musicians are, in sum, innovative pioneers in a new cultural space who actively create the *interculture* of a diaspora. Operating at cultural frontiers, they at the same time take on a dual role, as a bridge between their home countries and Britain. Stokes indicates that 'musicians in many parts of the world have a magpie attitude towards genres, picked up, transformed and reinterpreted in their own terms' (1994, 16). But, more than this, diasporic musicians must develop their music beyond familiar boundaries, taking on more global perspectives while attempting to gain recognition within a new culture.

## CHAPTER 7

### Conclusion

This study began with the aim of illustrating the musical activities of the Korean diaspora in London, and demonstrating how these activities are organised and practised by individuals and groups. Throughout, I have attempted to show how Koreans use music as a medium for expressing their identity and how they appreciate the music that is made and used, to highlight how music 'provides means by which people recognise identities and places, and the boundaries which separate them' (after Stokes 1994, 5). Here, I reflect on the preceding chapters to further explore the complexities of issues surrounding music and diaspora. Baily and Collyer suggest seven issues that affect music and migration: the type of migration, spatial and cultural proximity, music and identity, musical transformations, music for the audience, therapeutic possibilities, and cohesive and divisive outcomes (2006, 172). In my discussion, I have used this categorisation to explore the relations between music and the Korean diaspora in London. Furthermore, I have examined the multiple cultural layers of the Korean diaspora in London in so doing taking Slobin's conception of *superculture*, *subculture*, and *interculture* as a model that has enabled me to emphasise the importance and roles of multi-layered culture in the diaspora.

The type of migration taken by North and South Koreans shows a radical contrast. Most South Koreans would be classified as economic migrants, working overseas but still able to visit their home country without constraint. In contrast, North Koreans in the UK are refugees disconnected from their homeland and unable to go back since they are considered traitors who have left their country. Although these North Koreans are able to visit South Korea, they do not regard South Korea as their home country, as they were not born and did not grow up there. This contrasting relation to the home country greatly affects their spatial and cultural proximity to the single Korean diaspora in London. The South Korean government encourages cultural activities among overseas Korean communities worldwide, providing funding for events and instruments for workshops. However, there is no obvious support from the North Korean government. Moreover, it is almost impossible to find North Korean music

instructors or physical materials to support teaching and performing North Korean music in London, as professional musical training is only given to people in certain classes and groups in North Korea. Hence, the support, the availability of instructors, and the accessibility to cultural materials from South Korea make the southern culture dominant over that of the North. As a result, most of the Korean cultural festivals in London have been organised by South Koreans and showcase South Korean culture. All music instructors, including at the London Korean School and for senior citizen activities, come from South Korea, so they teach what they learned in South Korea. It is true that North Koreans in the UK have more access to North Korean music than North Koreans in South Korea would have, due to the South Korean national security legislation not applying in the UK. However, website material is limited, and instruments from North Korea are difficult to procure, albeit that some instruments are shared with South Korea (such as the *jangu* drum) or other countries (such as the accordion). In respect to instruments, the Arirang Gayageum Ensemble plays the *gayageum*, a zither that exists both in North and South Korea, but the version they use is the 12-stringed version still in use in South Korea, rather than the North Korean version, which today normally has 21 strings. North Koreans in London tend to acculturate towards South Korean music, and this is inevitable given that a dominant culture is one that is more accessible and influential. This is a matter of privilege, with an 'invisible weightless knapsack of special provisions' (McIntosh 1988, 2), although in this quote I am re-situating an account of male privilege to reflect the reality of the North Korean refugee experience in London. Despite this unfavourable situation, North Koreans in London have begun to preserve their cultural identity by performing and listening to music from their own culture.

Carl Graumann (1983, 314) usefully points out that everyone has multiple identities, which are the result of identifying one's own environment, being identified through or by one's environment, and identifying with one's environment. Multiple identities are understood as the 'names we give to the different ways we are positioned' (Hall 1990, 225). Koreans in London reveal much the same: they do not have a single identity, but a plurality of selves, both as individuals and as a group, which can be expressed through music and culture. Of these, national identity is the most recognisable factor for a diasporic

community, and in this, a 'musical style can be made emblematic of national identities' (Stokes 1994, 13). Specifically, traditional music falls into the *superculture* element for many diasporas, as it is obviously the most exceptional element that defines one from another. Thus, and much as in the same way as with other Korean diasporas across the world (e.g. B. S. Song 1975; Sutton 1987; B.-w. Lee 1988; Um 1996, 2000, 2005; Pease 2001; D.L. Kwon 2001; M.K. Seo 2001; Y. Yu 2007), traditional music is utilised as a symbol of Korean cultural identity by the Korean community in London. Although North and South Koreans vary in their awareness of traditional music, folksongs enable a shared music-making, because of shared melodies and styles. It is through cultural education initiatives at the London Korean School, through musical activities among senior citizens, and through churches, festivals, and other events, that Korean community members sustain their ethnic and cultural identity in a foreign land.

Although children's songs are important for representing Korean identity, they are rarely discussed in diasporic cultural discourse. Most of the first generation of South Korean immigrants received their education in Korea, so they are familiar with (South) Korean children's songs. Such songs are reminiscent of childhood and the homeland. North Koreans have not learned the same children's songs in their youth, yet pick them up quickly due to simple melodies and Korean lyrics with which everyone can empathise. One particular song, '*Uri-ui sowoneun tongil*/Our wish is unification' is, unlike elsewhere, specifically sung regularly among the Korean diaspora in London, due to the exceptional mix of southern and northern Koreans in its community. It presents their wish for unification between the two competing states, and strengthens community solidarity. De Vos has suggested we should recognise a bifurcated perspective on identity, wherein ethnic identity stands in comparison to social identity (1995, 27). In this, ethnic identity is considered oriented to the past and is the 'subjective, symbolic or emblematic use of any aspect of culture' (ibid., 24). In this respect, children's songs, as well as traditional music, can in particular be understood for the Korean diaspora as *superculture*; this music expresses ethnic identity for Koreans in London, allowing them to recall their home country or their childhood. In contrast, social identity is oriented to the present or future and can involve ideological affiliation and occupation. Thus, Korean religious or popular music

becomes a vehicle for social identity. 'Our wish is unification' hardly belongs to either category, but in some respects can be assigned to both. It reminds Koreans of suffering, of war and division in the past, while at the same time it transmits their wish for the reunification of Korea in the future.

Members of the Korean diaspora express their common sentiment as being Korean through *superculture*, while presenting their individual interests and identities taking part in group activities, which forms part of the *subculture*. As shown in Chapter 5, various music activities are held on a regular basis in the community. Koreans organise music groups based on their musical tastes (the Arirang Gayageum Ensemble, Youn Hwa Sa Samulnori Team, Janggu and Minyo Group, and Korean choirs), or for common interest and for unity as artists (Korean Artists Association UK). North Koreans also absorb part of this *subculture* in the diaspora. It is common among North Korean to play familiar songs through Youtube as background music at their events, and some will dance to the music. Although some tracks are almost identical to South Korean songs, northern identity is recognised due to the specific, modified vocal style. The Arirang Yesuldan, the only North Korean performing group in the UK, actively presents northern music and dance, but must overcome inherent difficulties such as limited financial support, the limited availability of instructors, and the lack of physical materials. Their performances allow North Koreans to maintain nostalgic memories of their heritage, while others get the chance to appreciate their unique and hitherto rarely-experience culture.

Korean churches also play a vital role for Korean communities overseas as a *subculture*, providing fellowship for immigrants and social services for members. They use Korean Christian music in their services, which is either composed by Koreans or has Korean lyrics. This gives a religious identity to all South and North Korean Christians. Also, Korean Christians do not hesitate to express their religious identity in public through music, as a form of what Anna Nekola, discussing evangelical Christian groups in the United States, has characterised as 'worship as lifestyle' (2009, 370). Although Christianity is essentially the established religion of Britain, it does not have the status of an official religion in Korea. Nonetheless, it is common to play Korean Christian music in Korean stores and even at non-religious events, due to the high

percentage of Christians in the Korean community. Although these *subculture* activities are not representative of the diaspora as a whole, they make the culture richer.

Music can also express individual identity. Identity, Thomas Turino notes, involves the specific selection of attributes that we use to present ourselves to the world (2008, 102), hence our choice of music can be a significant factor in displaying our identity. Although there may be individual differences, professional musicians in London share a common identity through the genres they choose to express themselves through. Korean Western classical musicians must be technically outstanding to compete in what they consider the home of classical music, while overcoming prejudice against Korean and, in general, Asian musicians. Korean pop musicians emphasise expressions of 'self' through their music-making, which again reflects their experience and grounds their identity. Traditional Korean musicians, meanwhile, present Korean culture in music and instruments that are, *per se*, national symbols. They play traditional repertoires but transform how the particular genre they choose is perceived. Some collaborate with others from different musical backgrounds, taking advantage of living in a multicultural city; yet others create new music by developing works that use traditional idioms. In these ways, each expresses their identity as an individual musician beyond the limit imposed by a tradition, thereby creating *interculture*. Although the transformation involved in the Korean diaspora is small compared to other communities in Britain such as the Indian or African, the scene has been growing through the activities of individual musicians as time goes on.

Not only professionals, but amateurs participate in everyday music-making. Music offers numerous advantages to individuals as Stephanie Pitts has discussed (2005, 10) and acts as a distinctive mode to realise an individuals' presence in a society, as Ruth Finnegan has outlined (2007, 339). So it is with Koreans. The six amateur musicians described in Chapter 6 participate in musical activities for different reasons and employ music in different ways, either or both as an expression of identity or to foster social relations. Specifically, music serves as a significant healing medium for those having traumatic memories. Joshua Pilzer (2011), writing on the lives of three Korean survivors who were comfort

women for the Japanese army during the Second Sino-Japanese War and the Asia-Pacific War, illustrates how music heals traumatic memories and helps them forge relationships between fellow sufferers. Refugees offer a similar a case in point, as they often suffer from traumatic experiences such as loss of home and uncertainty about asylum status, as Dokter has detailed (1998, 17). I have observed how music served a therapeutic aspect among North Korean refugees in London. As such, and confirming the discussion of David Hesmondhalgh, music provides numerous benefits, which can be considered as the 'rewards' of playing music (2013, 55).

Su Zheng (1990) has shown how diasporic experiences effect the direction of groups' musical activities among Chinese Americans in the United States. She contrasts two groups, dividing them by the way they appreciate music within their community. Although her first group, who came to the US as family or relatives of the earlier migrants, was inward-looking due to discrimination and lack of recognition, this would not generally be the case for the Korean diaspora in London. As CJ reported (in Chapter 3), many Koreans who settled in Europe in the 1970 and 1980s suffered from discrimination and a perception of them as lesser citizens. Indeed, CJ founded the Korean Cultural Centre in Britain to change that misperception, aiming to provide a truer image of his motherland. As with the second group Zheng identifies, outward-directed cultural activities of the Korean diaspora in Britain have been organised often since CJ's initiative (as discussed in Chapter 4). Of course, group rehearsals and individual practice have inward-turning attitude (after Baily and Collyer 2006, 175-76), but the activities which aim toward public performance and sharing are 'outward-directed'.

Along with the Korean diaspora, I looked into how the Chinese and Japanese diasporas in London followed different courses in respect to cultural initiatives. The longest established and largest among the three, the Chinese, have developed a variety of activities centred around Chinatown in London. Along with the annual Chinese New Year Festival, most activities are outward-directed, with public announcements given in both Chinese and English, even though more Chinese tend to attend the events than people from other nationalities. In contrast, the Japanese diaspora holds a larger number of commercial events, with the continuity of sponsorship from foundations enabling these to become

permanent fixtures in the London cultural calendar. They also organise activities such as choirs aimed only at community members (inward-directed), and other activities which are geared towards engaging local enthusiasts of Japanese culture (outward-directed). Due to its long establishment, the Japanese community attracts many local people to its activities.

In the three diasporas, new musical initiatives have in particular been pursued by professional musicians willing to collaborate with others or to create their own work to reflect their diasporic identity within a multicultural London. Such musicians are significant in generating *interculture* by combining their own ethnic culture with the culture of their new home. For sure, *interculture* is also produced by members of diasporas as they interact with local people. However, professional musicians are more active and give more time to creating new music and culture than amateurs. They constantly agonise over how to create works that will suit the tastes of audiences in the multicultural city, and try hard to expand their horizons. Specifically, The Frank Chickens is an excellent example of *interculture*, as the group gained a fan base that supports it to continue making their unique style of music and performance in London. Targeting niche markets with the new music and culture that The Frank Chickens created clearly worked well. By providing this comparative research between the three East Asian diasporas, I hope it will encourage the further development of cultural events among the Korean diaspora, by identifying the strengths and weaknesses of all three as they have evolved so far in London.

The social impact of music activities among a diaspora is a notable aspect of my thesis. Although the classic studies on the social impact of music by, for example, Alan Merriam and John Blacking are now becoming dated, they remain relevant, since music has, to cite Merriam's words, 'internal continuity and stability' in terms of culture (1964, 306). As shown in Chapters 3 and 4, music is utilised as a means of settling into a new area and communicating with local people. Members of the diaspora share their own culture with neighbours in the local community, and by doing so they seek to promote better understanding. Festivals attract not only local residents, but also people from outside the diaspora, which is why Kingston Council hopes the Korean activities it sponsors will boost its local economy – such a cooperation between a migrant community



and a local authority provides a good example for the promotion of diversity and integration.

As well as interacting with local communities, music also strengthens the unity of members in a diaspora, because music is, as Thomas Turino has argued, an 'important source for realising collective identities' (1999, 221). In particular, music has contributed to the concord between North and South Koreans in the London-based diaspora. Despite speaking the same language, people from the two Koreas find it challenging to get along with each other. The general prohibition of exchange between the two over the last 75 years means they have little to share, while the dominance of one culture in the community has created an atmosphere in which North Koreans must adapt and acculturate to their South Korean peers. They have done this through music; in particular, folksongs have become a 'selective tradition' (Williams 1998 [1961]). Interestingly, Adeleida Reyes (1999, 172-74), writing about the Vietnamese community in the US, asserts that the selection of aspects of a particular tradition differs between forced and voluntary migrants due to their relation to the home country. However, this needs to be refined somewhat to account for Koreans in Britain, where the reason for choosing folksong as a medium for cultural integration is to facilitate a shared sense of emotional attachment, especially among the elderly. The older generation also enjoys *trot* songs, a popular genre with roots in the 1930s, often appreciating these songs more than any other type of music. For instance, Korean Senior Citizens in the UK has a regular monthly social event at a *noraebang* (singing room), where *trot* as well as other songs are sung to solidify friendship and unity.

With a unified identity, Koreans try to preserve and transmit their own culture to the next generation in a land far removed from its origin, while simultaneously acculturating to the new homeland's customs and laws. Assimilation is inevitable, and I have observed that the younger generation tends to acculturate to the British society faster than older members of the diaspora, since they experience greater exposure to local culture in their daily lives. This confirms what other scholars have found in their studies of other Korean and other Asian diasporas elsewhere (e.g. Minoura 1992; Tsai, Yu-Wen, and Lee 2000; Cheung, Chudek, and Heine 2011). It falls to the older generation to put

considerable effort into connecting with and passing on their cultural heritage. By using music as a tool for expressing a shared identity, North and South Koreans in London narrow the cultural gap, understand each other better, and construct a more united identity as – again, using a phrase from Thomas Turino – a ‘cultural cohort’ (2008). This cohort creates what many, following Benedict Anderson, would term an ‘imagined community’ (2016 [1983]), in this case an imagined community of unified Koreans residing in a foreign land.

The aim of this thesis was to present an overview of music among the Korean diaspora in London. Discussion was guided by three chief concerns: detailing the variety of music pursued, and its presentation in the community; exploring music as a medium of expressing identity; and the meaning and impact of musical activities. The Korean diaspora in London has hitherto been largely overlooked in scholarship, despite the large number – almost certainly, the unprecedented number – of North and South Koreans clustered together in a single community. By looking at the multiple levels of cultural activities among the Korean diaspora, I have been able to investigate not only the most visible *superculture*, but also cultural activities in the community that occupy the *subculture*, and cultural exchanges as *interculture*, and to explore how these, each individually and taken together, affect the Korean community as well as the local society. By providing a complete musical picture of the entirety of the diaspora, I believe my research contributes to current discourse, providing data on how music facilitates the negotiation of identity both by individuals and by groups, and how music fosters group integrity. Edward Said once stated that ‘No one today is purely *one* thing. Labels like Indian, or woman, or Muslim, or American are no more than starting-points’ (1993, 336), and in our globalised and transnational world, people are exposed to increasingly diverse cultural forms every day. Cultural identity is no longer (and perhaps never was) an immutable concept, but is constantly produced and reproduced through time and place; in stating this, I note that my conclusions fit the broad outlines of Stuart Hall’s thesis (1990, 225). While negotiating multiple cultural identities is indeed challenging, the actors from the Korean diaspora who have been introduced in this thesis show that embracing and respecting diversity can result in insightful

understandings of ourselves and others, and can make us able to better adapt to new environments while holding on to our own ethnic heritage.

## APPENDIX– Questionnaires for Formal Interviews

Below I give the questionnaires used as frames for formal interviews in order to collect quantitative data. In most cases, my interviews with individuals were conducted more freely, allowing for the collection of qualitative data.

### 1. Kingston Welcomes Korea

1. How did you know about this performance? (이 공연을 어떻게 알고 오셨습니까?)  
☐ Advertisement (광고)  
☐ Interest in Korean culture (한국문화에 관심)  
☐ Personal connection with the performer (공연자와의 친분)  
☐ Other(s) (기타) \_\_\_\_\_.
2. Are you satisfied with the event? Please rate on scale of 1 to 5 and give the reason  
(오늘 공연에 얼마나 만족하십니까? 이유도 함께 써 주십시오)  
Satisfaction: 1\_\_(very low) – 2\_\_(low) – 3\_\_(medium) – 4\_\_(high) – 5\_\_(very high)  
Reason: \_\_\_\_\_.
3. Have you attended any Korean festivals before? (이전에 한인 페스티벌에 가 본적이 있습니까?)  
☐ Yes, (how many times?) \_\_\_\_\_.  
☐ No
4. What do you expect to gain from the festival? (이 페스티벌을 통해 기대하는 것이 무엇입니까?)  
☐ Cultural entertainment (문화생활)  
☐ Experience more about Korean culture (한국문화에 대한 경험)  
☐ Improvement in relationship between Korean and Kingston community (킹스톤과 한인 커뮤니티의 관계 발전)  
☐ Other (s) (기타) \_\_\_\_\_.
5. Do you think this festival helps the Korean community in the UK?  
(이 행사가 영국의 한인커뮤니티에 도움이 된다고 생각하십니까?)  
Yes \_\_\_\_\_ or No \_\_\_\_\_, Because \_\_\_\_\_.
6. If this festival is held next year, are you going to attend again?  
(만약 이 행사가 내년에도 개최된다면 다시 방문할 의사가 있습니까?)  
Preference: 1\_\_(very low) – 2\_\_(low) – 3\_\_(medium) – 4\_\_(high) – 5\_\_(very high)
7. What do you think of as “Korean music”? (당신이 생각하는 한국음악은 무엇입니까?)  
☐ K-Pop (한국대중가요)  
☐ Korean traditional music (한국전통음악)  
☐ Western classical music performed by Koreans (한국인이 연주하는 서양 클래식음악)

☐ All kinds of music performed by Koreans (한국인이 연주하는 모든 종류의 음악)  
☐ Other(s) \_\_\_\_\_

8. In order for us to improve future Korean festivals, please give me your opinion.  
 (더 나은 한인페스티벌을 만들기 위한 의견 부탁드립니다)

\_\_\_\_\_

9. Your age (연령)  
 10s \_\_\_\_\_ 20s \_\_\_\_\_ 30s \_\_\_\_\_ 40s \_\_\_\_\_ 50s \_\_\_\_\_ 60s (or above) \_\_\_\_\_

10. Are you male or female? (성별) Male (남) \_\_\_\_\_ / Female (여) \_\_\_\_\_

11. How long have you lived in the UK? (영국 거주기간이 얼마나 되십니까?)  
☐ 0-3 years  
☐ 3-10 years  
☐ More than 10 years

12. What is your nationality? (국적이 어디입니까?)  
 \_\_\_\_\_ ( ☐ prefer not to say)

## 2-1. Autumn Fullmoon Festival 2016 (Kingston Korean Festival 2016)

1. How did you hear about this event? (*Tick all that apply*)  
☐ Newspaper article      ☐ Online      ☐ Poster  
☐ Word of mouth      ☐ Personal connection      ☐ Passing by  
☐ Interest in Korean culture      ☐ I heard about it in another way: \_\_\_\_\_

2. What do you expect to gain from this event? (*Tick all that apply*)  
☐ Cultural entertainment  
☐ Improvement in relationship between Korean and Kingston community  
☐ Experience more about Korean culture  
☐ Other(s): \_\_\_\_\_

3. How would you rate the whole experience?  
☐ Very good    ☐ Good    ☐ Neither good nor poor    ☐ Poor    ☐ Very poor    ☐ Don't know

4. How would you rate the each programme? (*Please give one rating for each item*)

	Very good	Good	Nether good nor poor	Poor	Very poor
Korean food and cooking demonstration					
Korean folk game					
Victorian tea time / craft sessions					
K-pop dance workshop / performance					
Taekwondo demonstration					
Korean traditional music					

5. If this festival is held next year, how likely are you to attend again?

☐ Very likely   ☐ Likely   ☐ Neither likely nor unlikely   ☐ Unlikely   ☐ Very Unlikely   ☐ Don't know

6. If this festival is held next year, what programme would you like it more to be included?  
☐ Very likely   ☐ Likely   ☐ Neither likely nor unlikely   ☐ Unlikely   ☐ Very Unlikely   ☐ Don't know

7. If Korean related workshops are being held in Kingston Town Centre, would you participate in them? If yes, which course are you interested in?  
☐ Yes: Korean cooking( ) K-pop dance( ) Korean percussion quartet( ) calligraphy( )  
☐ No

8. Is there anything else you would like to say about your visit? (*Please describe below*)

9. What gender are you?      ☐ Male                      ☐ Female                      ☐ Prefer not to say

10. Which of the following age groups do you belong to?  
☐ Under 16   ☐ 16-24   ☐ 25-34   ☐ 35-44   ☐ 45-54   ☐ 55-64   ☐ 65 or older  
☐ Prefer not to say

11. What is your ethnicity/nationality?  
 Ethnicity   ☐ European   ☐ Asian   ☐ African   ☐ Prefer not to say   ☐ Other:  
 Nationality ☐ British      ☐ Korean   ☐ Chinese   ☐ Prefer not to say   ☐ Other:

## 2-1. Kingston Korean Festival 2017

1. How did you hear about this event? (*Tick all that apply*)  
☐ Newspaper article      ☐ Online                      ☐ Poster  
☐ Word of mouth              ☐ Personal connection      ☐ Passing by  
☐ Interest in Korean culture   ☐ I heard about it in another way: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Did you come here (Kingston) specifically for this festival?  
☐ Yes                                      ☐ No

3. Have you been to the Kingston Korean Festival last year?  
☐ Yes                                      ☐ No

4. What do you expect to gain from this event? (*Tick all that apply*)  
☐ Cultural entertainment  
☐ Improvement in relationship between Korean and Kingston community  
☐ Experience more about Korean culture  
☐ Other(s): \_\_\_\_\_

5. How would you rate the whole experience?  
☐ Very good   ☐ Good   ☐ Neither good nor poor   ☐ Poor   ☐ Very poor   ☐ Don't know

6. How would you rate the each programme? (*Please give one rating for each item*)

	Very good	Good	Nether good nor poor	Poor	Very poor
Gilnori					
Korean Food and Cooking Demonstration					

Korean Folk Game					
Korean Traditional Music					
K-pop and Contemporary Music					
Korean Martial Arts Demonstration					
Community Stage					

7. If this festival is held next year, how likely are you to attend again?  
☐ Very likely ☐ Likely ☐ Neither likely nor unlikely ☐ Unlikely ☐ Very Unlikely ☐ Don't know

8. If this festival is held next year, what programme would you like it more to be included?  
☐ Very likely ☐ Likely ☐ Neither likely nor unlikely ☐ Unlikely ☐ Very Unlikely ☐ Don't know

9. Is there anything else you would like to say about your visit? (*Please describe below*)

10. What gender are you? ☐ Male ☐ Female ☐ Prefer not to say

11. Where is your residence? ☐ Kingston ☐ Outside Kingston ☐ Prefer not to say

12. Which of the following age groups do you belong to?  
☐ Under 16 ☐ 16-24 ☐ 25-34 ☐ 35-44 ☐ 45-54 ☐ 55-64 ☐ 65 or older  
☐ Prefer not to say

13. What is your ethnicity/nationality?  
 Ethnicity ☐ European ☐ Asian ☐ African ☐ Prefer not to say ☐ Other:  
 Nationality ☐ British ☐ Korean ☐ Chinese ☐ Prefer not to say ☐ Other:

### 3-1. London Korean School – Parents

1. How long have your child been attending London Korean School? (자녀분이 한글학교를 다니지 얼마나 되었습니까?)

2. Why do you want your child to attend this school? (자녀분이 왜 한글학교에 다니길 바라십니까?)

3. What do you think of the performance event today and which part was the best? (오늘 공연에 대해 어떻게 생각하십니까? 가장 좋았던 부분은?)

4. Are you satisfied with the school curriculum? (한글학교 커리큘럼에 만족하십니까?)  
 Yes / No Reason(이유):

5. What type of music do you want your child to learn? (자녀분이 어떤 음악을 배우길 바라십니까?)

Gender   M / F   Years in the UK (영국거주기간)

### 3-2. London Korean School – Students

Age\_\_\_\_\_ Gender M / F Years in the UK\_\_\_\_\_

1. What kind of music do you listen in your everyday life?
2. What kind of music do you listen when you are with your family?
3. What do you think of 'Korean music'?
4. What kind of music would you like to introduce in a situation when you need to show 'Korea'?
5. Do you think learning the Korean traditional music is helpful for you? Yes / No  
Reason:

### 4-1. London Korean Nationality School (1<sup>st</sup> round)

Age\_\_\_\_\_ Gender M / F Years in the UK\_\_\_\_\_

1. What kind of music do you listen in your everyday life?
2. What kind of music do you listen when you are with your family?
3. What do you think of 'Korean music'?
4. What kind of music would you like to introduce in a situation when you need to show 'Korea'?
5. Do you think learning the Korean traditional music is helpful for you? Yes / No  
Reason:

### 4-2. London Korean Nationality School (2<sup>nd</sup> round)

Age\_\_\_\_\_ Gender M / F Years in the UK\_\_\_\_\_

1. What kind of music do you listen to in your everyday life?  
① K-pop ② Pop ③ Classical ④ Religious ⑤ Don't ⑥ Other: \_\_\_\_\_
2. What kind of music do you listen to when you are with your family?  
① K-pop ② Pop ③ Classical ④ Religious ⑤ Don't ⑥ Other: \_\_\_\_\_
3. What kind of Korean music do you know?  
① K-pop ② Children songs ③ Traditional ④ Classical ⑤ Religious  
⑥ Other: \_\_\_\_\_
4. What kind of Korean music do you like?



- ① K-pop   ② Children songs   ③ Traditional   ④ Classical   ⑤ Religious  
⑥ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

5. What do you think of 'Korean music'?

- ① Exciting   ② Fun   ③ Calm   ④ Gloomy   ⑤ Boring   ⑥ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

## GLOSSARY

***a-ak***: one of the traditional Korean music genres that refers to ritual music

**AFKN**: abb. of American Forces Korea Network.

***ajaeng***: a Korean zither played with a bow

***arangetram***: the debut on-stage performance of a former student of Indian classical dance and music.

***Arirang***: a well-known traditional Korean folksong

**Arirang Yesuldan**: lit. Arirang art troupe. Formerly *Bukhan minsok seon-gyo yesuldan*. Formed in 2017 by Kim Hyunju.

***bangchang***: off-stage chorus in North Korean revolutionary operas that explains scenes from a third-person perspective behind or next to the stage

***bbaekpan***: pirated version of records

***bogeum seongga***: lit. gospel songs. Refers to Christian popular music that shares similar western tonality, chord progression, and instrumentation.

***buchaechum***: Korean fan dance

***buk***: a double-sided barrel-shaped Korean drum

***Bukhan minsok seon-gyo yesuldan***: lit. North Korean missionary folk-art troupe, which was renamed Arirang Yesuldan.

**CCC**: abb. of the Chinese Community Centre in Chinatown.

**CCM**: abb. of Christian Contemporary Music. Refers to Christian music composed using pop music elements.

***changga*** (*shōka* in Japanese): Japanese school songs specifically for children and youths. In a broader sense, it is composed or imported Japanese songs based on Western musical idioms.

***changgeuk***: a type of Korean opera based on *pansori*

***changjak dong-yo***: creative children's songs

***changjak gugak***: lit. creative traditional Korean music, a.k.a *fusion gugak* or *modern gugak*. It refers to pieces composed with new techniques influenced by Western music since the 1930s, and used as a counterpart to *gugak*.

***chansongga***: Songs of praise, a.k.a *chanmiga*, *chanyangga*.

***Cheongnyeondan***: lit. Youth organisation of (North) Korea. All young people from 14 to 30 are required to join this.

***Cheongseonggok***: one of the most favoured *daegeum* pieces of literati music.

**Chollima Movement** (*Cheollima undong* in the Revised Romanisation of Korean): North Korean government-led movement to promote rapid economic development and production launched in the late 1950s.

***Chuseok***: one of the four important Korean traditional holidays that specifically refers to the Korean Harvest.

***chutney***: an Indo-Caribbean genre of music.

***daegeum***: a Korean horizontal bamboo flute.

**Dokdo**: one of the islands in the East Sea of Korea.

***Dol***: a child's first birthday and traditionally the most important birthday celebration.

***doljabi***: a traditional Korean ceremony for a baby's first birthday in which the child chooses one of a set of objects from a ceremonial table.

***Dallanteu hakgyo***: lit. talent school. A part of the educational programmes for children at the London Full Gospel Church.

***Dano***: one of the four important Korean traditional holidays that specifically refers to the early summer festival on 5th May in the lunar calendar year.

***daseureum***: a kind of prelude. A short piece played to control the speed of music before playing the main piece.

***dizi***: a Chinese horizontal bamboo flute.

***dong-yo***: Korean children's song.

***enka***: one of Japan's popular music genres.

***erhu***: a two-stringed Chinese vertical fiddle.

***eumak***: music.

***fusion gugak***: traditional music mixed with Western musical elements.

***gagok***: Korean art song influenced by German Lieder.

***gageuk***: lit. song drama. Refers to North Korean opera and is divided into two categories: *hyeongmyeong gageuk* (revolutionary opera) and *minjok gageuk* (people's opera).

***Gangbuk Leondeon Hanguk Hakgyo***: the North London Korean School, a Korean complementary school in Barnet run by the South Korean government.

***gayageum***: a Korean zither, traditionally with 12 strings, although it can have up to 25 strings in its modern incarnation.

***gayageum byeongchang***: a *pansori*-derived genre in which a singer sings *pansori* or *minyo* pieces while accompanying themselves on the *gayageum*.

***gayageum sanjo***: traditional Korean folk-art instrumental music played on the *gayageum*.

***gayo***: Korean popular songs, a.k.a *daejung gayo* or *daejung eumak*.

***geomungo***: a traditional Korean six-stringed zither with frets.

***ggwaenggwari***: a traditional Korean small gong.

***Gidokgyo daehan hananimui seonghoe***: the Assemblies of God of Korea, one of the Protestant denominations in South Korea.

***gillori***: a traditional Korean opening ceremonial parade with percussion music and dance.

***Gireul channeun saramdeul***: lit. people seeking their ways. A regular missionary concert at the London Full Gospel Church.

***Gojeonak Yeon-guso***: lit. Korean classical music research institute, in North Korea.

***gu-eum***: a traditional style of singing sounds without lyrics.

***gugak***: lit. national music. Used to describe traditional Korean music in general.

***guqin***: a Chinese seven-stringed zither, a.k.a *qin*.

***gutgeori***: one of the traditional Korean rhythmic cycle patterns in 12/8.

***guzheng***: a Chinese 21-stringed zither.

***GVC***: abb. of God's Vision Church, in central London.

***gyeongbaewa chanyang***: Praise and Worship.

***Gyeongseong Bangsong Gwanhyeonakdan***: JODK Orchestra/Gyeongseong Broadcasting Station Orchestra founded in 1928. Gyeongseong Broadcasting Station was known as the JODK.

***Gyeongseong Eumak Jeonmun Hakgyo***: Gyeongseong conservatoire, established in 1945.

***Gyeongseong Gwanhyeonakdan***: Gyeongseong Orchestra, founded in 1934.

***gyohoe***: lit. church.

***gyohwaso***: a special re-education prison camp in North Korea for criminals convicted of border crossing, stealing food or trading illegally. Prisoners are forced to undergo ideological instruction in North Korea.

***haegeum***: a two-stringed Korean vertical fiddle.

**Hallyu:** the Korean Wave.

**hanbok:** traditional Korean costume.

**hangeul:** Korean alphabet.

**Hanin Hyeophoe:** lit. Korean association. The official name of the Korean Residents Society until 1987.

**Hansik:** one of the four important Korean traditional holidays that specifically refers to the 105th day after the winter solstice.

**Hanyeong Munhwawon:** the Korean Cultural Centre in Britain, founded and run by Kim Chang-jin between 1993 and 1997.

**hongik in-gan:** a notion of humanitarianism that refers to the founding principle of Gojoseon, the first state in Korean history.

**hwimori:** one of the traditional Korean rhythmic cycle patterns in 4/4.

**hyeongmyeong gageuk:** revolutionary opera of North Korea that includes the five operas: *Sea of Blood*; *Flower Girl*; *Oh! Tell the Forest*; *True Daughter of the Party*; *Song of Mt. Kumgang*.

**Jae-ilbon Daehanmin-gungmindan (Mindan):** the Korean Residents Union in Japan, referring to one of two main organisations for Koreans living in Japan and having close ties to South Korea.

**Jae-ilbon Joseonin Chong-yeonghaphoe (Chongryeon):** the General Association of Korean Residents in Japan, referring to one of two main organisations for Korean Japanese and having close ties to North Korea.

**Jaeyeong Eorini Hakgyo:** lit. UK Korean children's school. Renamed the London Korean School in 1977.

**Jaeyeong Hanguk Gyominhoe:** lit. overseas Koreans in the UK. An immigrant-centric association run between 1980 and 1988.

**Jaeyeong Hanin Yesurin Hyeophoe (formerly Jaeyeong Hanin Yesurinhoe):** the Korean Artists Association UK, formed in 1997.

**Jaeyeong Talbungmin Yeonhaphoe:** lit. North Korean defectors federation in the UK. Refers to the North Korean Residents Society.

**Jaeyeongguk Hanin Yeonhaphoe:** lit. UK Korean federation, A Korean association formed in 2012 with Kim Si-woo as president, but currently disbanded.

**jaju:** one of the three components of *juche* ideology. Refers to self-reliant politics.

***jangu***: a double-sided hourglass-shaped Korean drum.

***jarip***: one of the three components of *juche* ideology. Refers to self-sufficient economy.

***jawi***: one of the three components of *juche* ideology. Refers to national self-defence.

***jegichagi***: a folk game.

***jeolga***: a strophic form of verses to explain and supplement scenes in North Korean revolutionary operas.

***jeollae dong-yo***: traditional children's songs.

***jeong-ak***: one of the traditional Korean music genres that refers to ancient aristocratic music.

***jianpu***: Chinese number notation.

***jing***: a traditional Korean big gong.

***Joseon Eumak Hyeophoe***: the Chosun Music Association organised at the end of the Japanese occupation of Korea.

***Joseon Rodongdang***: the Workers' Party of (North) Korea.

***Joseon Sonyeondan***: lit. Juvenile organisation of (North) Korea. For children aged between 9 - 15.

***joseonjok***: Korean Chinese.

***juche***: lit. self-reliance. A fundamental idea in North Korean political ideology.

***juil hakgyo***: lit. Sunday school. Refers to an educational programme organised by a church to teach children the Bible every Sunday.

***KAAUK***: abb. of the Korean Artists Association UK, founded in 1997.

***KACC***: abb. of the Korean Anglican Community Centre Limited. A cultural organisation founded in 2000 by the Anglican Church of Korea.

***KBCE***: abb. of the Korean British Cultural Exchange. A non-profit cultural organisation founded by Jang Jung-eun in 2016.

***KCCB***: abb. of the Korean Cultural Centre in Britain, founded by Kim Chang-jin ran between 1993 and 1997.

***KCCUK***: abb. of the Korean Cultural Centre UK, founded by the South Korean government in 2008.

***KCKC***: abb. of King's Cross Korean Church, located in Notting Hill.

***KCPA***: abb. of the Korean Cultural Promotion Agency. Formerly Nori Production

Limited. A non-profit cultural organisation run between 2003 – 2009.

**KEAA:** abb. of the Korea Entertainment Agency Association.

**KIC:** abb. of the Korean Information Centre, formed by the charity organisation Theatre for All and aiming to serve the Korean community in New Malden.

**KLCC:** abb. of the Korean London Concert Choir, formed by Seok Il-soo in 1995.

**KNRS:** abb. of the Korean Nationality Residents Society. A North Korean association formed in 2014 with Choi Seung-chul as president, but disbanded in 2016.

**KORSA:** abb. of the Korean Restaurants and Supermarkets Association.

**KOSS:** abb. of the Korean Overseas Students Society, organised in 1958.

**KRS:** abb. of the Korean Residents Society. A South Korean association formed in 1964.

**LCCA:** abb. of the London Chinatown Chinese Association, founded in 1978.

**Leondeon Hanguk Hakgyo:** the London Korean School. A Korean complementary school in Chessington run by the South Korean government.

**LFGC:** abb. of London Full Gospel Church, in New Malden.

**LIPA:** abb. of Liverpool Institute for Performing Arts.

**LKC:** abb. of the London Korean Church, in Kingston.

**LKCS:** abb. of the London Korean Choral Society, formed by Lim Sun-hwa in 2017.

**LKNS:** abb. of the London Korean Nationality School. A Korean complementary school in New Malden, founded in 2016 by the Korean Nationality Residence Society.

**LKS:** abb. of the London Korean School, a Korean complementary school in Chessington run by the South Korean government.

**London Hanin Cheonjugyohoe:** Korean Catholic Church in London. Actually, located in Sutton.

**LOS:** abb. of London Okinawa Sanshinkai.

***mariachi*:** a genre of regional Mexican music.

***minjok eumak*:** national music of North Korea.

***minjok gageuk*:** national/people's opera of North Korea, which reinterprets traditional contents with *juche* ideology.

***minyo*:** folksongs.

***mipalgulsho*:** lit. American 8<sup>th</sup> army show. Refers to the epicentre of American

pop music and the birthplace of Korean popular music in the 1950s and 1960s in Korea.

***namsadang***: a traditional Korean troupe incorporating music and puppetry.

**NKRS**: abb. of the North Korean Residents Society. A North Korean association formed in 2010.

**NMAF**: abb. of the New Malden Arts Festival. Run by the charity organisation Theatre for All from 2007 to 2015.

***nong-ak***: traditional Korean rural band music, a.k.a *pungmul*.

***noraebang***: singing room, a.k.a *karaoke*.

***okryugum* (*ongnyugeum* in Revised Romanisation)**: a modified North Korean zither developed from the *wagonghu* (box zither) in the 1970s.

***pansori***: epic storytelling through song.

***pipa***: a Chinese four-stringed lute.

***pokeu song***: lit. folksongs. Refers to acoustic guitar songs.

***pungmul***: lit. wind object, a.k.a *nong-ak*. It refers to the traditional percussion music and dance performance comprised of various percussion instruments and a wind instrument, and often performed in rural areas in the past.

**Rodongdang**: a.k.a Joseon Rodongdang, the Workers' Party of North Korea.

***Saemaeul Undong***: the South Korean government-led movement launched by former president Park Chung-hee in 1971 to improve and modernise rural communities.

***samulnori***: Korean percussive quartet performance derived from *pungmul*.

***sanjo***: lit. scattered melodies. Refers to traditional Korean folk-art instrumental music.

***sarod***: a lute used mainly in Hindustani music.

***seoljangu***: a solo percussion performance on *janggu*.

***Seollal***: one of the four important Korean traditional holidays that specifically refers to Korean New Year's Day.

***seoyang eumak***: Western art music.

***semachi***: one of the traditional Korean rhythmic cycle patterns in 9/8.

***shamisen***: a traditional Japanese three-stringed lute.

***sinawi***: a shamanistic improvisational instrumental genre.

***sin-gugak***: lit. new traditional music.



***sinminyo***: lit. new folksong. Refers to folksongs composed in the 1900s or having a mixture of traditional Korean and Western musical elements.

***sogo***: a Korean small-handed drum.

***sohaegeum***: an instrument developed in the 1960s as a mixture of the traditional two-stringed *haegeum* fiddle and the violin, with four metal strings played by a violin bow, and a shape and playing posture resembling the *haegeum*.

***soyang gyoyuk***: anti-communist training that South Koreans mandatorily received.

**Taekwondo**: Korean martial arts.

***taiko***: a broad range of Japanese percussion instruments.

***talchum***: traditional Korean masked dance.

**T4A**: abb. of Theatre for All. A non-profit arts organisation founded by Shin Bona in 2006.

***trot*** (pronounced *teuroteu*): Korean popular songs influenced by Japanese *enka*.

***tsugaru shamisen***: a three-stringed Japanese lute played with a plectrum, originating from the Japanese Tsugaru peninsula.

***uibyeong***: righteous armies.

**UKCE**: abb. of the UK Chinese Ensemble, formed in 1998.

**UTAK**: abb. of the University of the Third Age for Koreans.

***yangqin***: a Chinese hammered dulcimer.

***yeondo***: the Korean Catholic funeral ceremony.

***Yeonghanhoe***: abb. UK Korean Association. Association of Korean Communities in the UK, formed in 2016 with Cho Hyun-ja as president, but disbanded in 2017.

***Yeongnam nong-ak***: the rhythmic patterns derived from the south-eastern Gyeongsang province in South Korea.

***Yeongguk Haninuihoe***: lit. association of UK Koreans. A Korean association formed in 2012 with Kim Myeon-hoe as president, but currently disbanded.

**YFGC**: abb. of Yoido Full Gospel Church in Seoul, founded in 1958 by David Yonggi Cho.

***yonanuki***: one of the traditional Japanese pentatonic scale.

**Youn Hwa Sa**: a Buddhist temple in Kingston.

***yuhaeng changga***: popular *changga*.

***zainichi***: foreign citizens residing in Japan.

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