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Acknowledgements

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6
7 This book began as a case study within the Australian Research Council Linkage 7
8 Project, ‘Sustainable futures for music cultures: Towards an ecology of musical 8
9 diversity’. Directed from Queensland Conservatorium Research Centre, Griffith 9
10 University, this enabled research to begin while I was Associate Dean at Sydney 10
11 Conservatorium of Music, and writing to take place after I returned to SOAS, 11
12 University of London. The Linkage Project supported the work of Hyelim Kim and 12
13 Hyunseok Kwon in conducting interviews. A Senior Fellowship at the Academy of 13
14 Korean Studies, Seongnam, Korea in 2014 enabled me to complete the manuscript 14
15 during research leave from SOAS. 15
16 Nathan Hesselink conducted the three interviews and wrote the third part 16
17 of Chapter 3, ‘Early Voices in SamulNori’s Historical Record’, and part of the 17
18 fourth part, ‘Binding Themes’. Originally intended as part of his book, *SamulNori: 18
19 Contemporary Korean Drumming and the Rebirth of Itinerant Performance 19
20 Culture* (2012), space limitations meant that only excerpts could be sampled there. 20
21 However, the interviews contain such valuable material that I feel they need to 21
22 see the light of day in their entirety. I am grateful to Nathan for allowing me 22
23 to print them here. The interviews are particularly poignant because one is with 23
24 Kang Chunhyök, who sadly passed away in August 2014 – including his interview 24
25 stands, in some small way, as a memorial to an inspiring manager and innovator. 25
26 His role in the development of SamulNori is also charted in a number of the 26
27 black and white photographs I include. Nathan and Nami Morris, both my former 27
28 students, generously agreed to give thought-provoking interviews, which form the 28
29 core of Chapter 7. Nathan is also the author of an important volume on a local 29
30 percussion band tradition (2006) that will be much cited in the following pages, 30
31 while Nami has since her pre-teen years been a disciple of the SamulNori hourglass 31
32 drum player and founding member, Kim Duk Soo [Kim Töksu]. I have benefited 32
33 immensely from accounts presented by Kim In Suk (on samulnori in the Korean 33
34 school curriculum) and Simon Mills (on the use of samulnori on a Korean island) 34
35 at a symposium held at SOAS, University of London, in April 2012, supported 35
36 through the Academy of Korean Studies (KSPS) Grant funded by the Korean 36
37 Government (MOE) (AKS-2011-BAA-2014). The same funds have supported the 37
38 preparation of some notations and the inclusion of some photographs here. 38
39 Joo Jay-youn [Chu Chaeyön] solved what had seemed an insurmountable 39
40 problem, when he provided a set of brilliant photographs, and I thank both him and 40
41 the Space Theatre for letting me use wonderfully evocative images of SamulNori 41
42 events old and new. During my Academy of Korean Studies’ fellowship, I was 42
43 able to attend a number of festivals and events, and I thank Kim Duk Soo and Yi 43
44 44

1 Kwangsu in particular for allowing me to take photographs at their festivals in 1
 2 Yesan and Ch'ilgok. 2

3 This book is a summation of almost 35 years of personal research, observation 3
 4 and participation. Over this extended period, I have referred to samulnori both 4
 5 specifically and tangentially in many of my publications. Bringing the material 5
 6 together in one volume means that I have here of necessity repeated previously 6
 7 published material; this is particularly pertinent in respect to one earlier book 7
 8 (Howard 2006c), where I began to formulate my thoughts about the genre. Some 8
 9 material derives from that book and a number of articles (particularly Howard 9
 10 1983a/b, 1991/2). 10

11 I first encountered the first quartet, SamulNori, in 1982, when I came across the 11
 12 quartet at the National Theatre rehearsing for their first foreign tour. The theatre 12
 13 was then the home of the National Gugak Centre, where I was taking lessons. I 13
 14 became a regular audience member at the Space Theatre, one of the key venues 14
 15 for early SamulNori performances. My sponsor for doctoral fieldwork between 15
 16 1982 and 1984 was the late musicologist Han Manyŏng, then a Seoul National 16
 17 University professor but who, as director of the National Gugak Centre (then known 17
 18 in English as the National Classical Music Institute), recruited Kim Yongbae, 18
 19 one of the founding SamulNori members, to establish a new samulnori quartet 19
 20 at the Centre. Back in Britain, I worked with the British agency Arts Worldwide 20
 21 as SamulNori's tour manager in 1985, at a time when Kim Yongbae's place had 21
 22 been taken by Kang Minsŏk. Kang and I shared an hourglass drum teacher, Kim 22
 23 Pyŏngsŏp, though while Kang had worked with Kim in Chŏlla Province, I had 23
 24 known him only later, after he settled in Seoul. I was still taking regular lessons 24
 25 from Kim Pyŏngsŏp in 1983 when I turned on my cassette recorder and asked if 25
 26 I could ask him for his take on SamulNori. This was several years after Kim had 26
 27 been one of the musicians the quartet had turned to when in 1979 they developed 27
 28 their piece '*Honam nongak*'. I again acted as tour manager for SamulNori in 1987, 28
 29 when the quartet was invited to return to Britain by the Arts Council of England's 29
 30 Contemporary Music Network. That same year, I attended a summer camp led by 30
 31 the Centre's samulnori quartet at Kangnŭng on Korea's East Coast; this was after 31
 32 the death of Kim Yongbae, and as the quartet settled on their second-generation 32
 33 line-up. 33

34 In 1988, I published my first notation of samulnori repertoire, creating a 34
 35 partial account of their four hourglass drum piece, '*Samdo sŏl changgo*', based on 35
 36 recordings I had made during their 1987 concerts in Britain (revised and included 36
 37 in Chapter 2 here). I used this and further notations to train a group of students 37
 38 and others at the University of Durham in 1988 and 1989. This group, consisting 38
 39 of Keiran Cheung, Steve Gibbs, Rebecca Mooney, Hugh Nankeville and Jonathan 39
 40 Thorpe, was invited to perform at a festival organised by SamulNori in July 1990. 40
 41 When the festival was postponed, the group and I were offered daily lessons 41
 42 for three weeks by the Centre's samulnori team. This led me to prepare a new 42
 43 notation for the rather different '*Samdo sŏl changgo*' performed at the Centre, 43
 44 as well as notations for additional pieces, which we performed back in Britain in 44

1 1991 (two of these are included in Chapters 2 and 5 below, previously published 1
2 in Howard 2006c). I began to teach samulnori at SOAS, University of London, 2
3 in 1992, taking student teams to later samulnori festivals in 1995 and 1997, and 3
4 dispatching a further team in 2000. Funding to enable us to attend festivals came 4
5 from a number of sources: SamulNori (and SamulNori Hanullim), the National 5
6 Gugak Centre, the British Council, the British Chamber of Commerce in Korea, 6
7 the Korean Residents Association in Britain, and the Korean Overseas Information 7
8 Service. 8

9 During the last 35 years I have been privileged to know many musicians as 9
10 friends, and I wish here to record my gratitude for the time so many have given, 10
11 for the access I have had to private materials, and for the willingness of so many 11
12 to answer my ignorant questions and to patiently coach me as I have stumbled 12
13 through the samulnori repertory. Chief amongst these are, of course, Kim Duk 13
14 Soo, Yi Kwangsu, Ch'oe Chongshil, Kang Minsok and Ch'oe Pyöngsam, along 14
15 with those named individually in the text below. Beyond these I owe a considerable 15
16 debt to too many to name individually: thank you, one and all. 16

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SamulNori, at the Space Theatre, 1981. (Photo: Space Theatre)

Introduction

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6
7 SamulNori is a quartet of Korean percussionists that first performed together 7
8 on stage in February 1978. The quartet's name, coined a few months later by 8
9 the Korean folklorist Shim Usōng, means 'four things play'. SamulNori rapidly 9
10 gained considerable popularity, so much so that many additional groups emerged, 10
11 and the distinct repertory and style of performance fostered by SamulNori 11
12 spawned a genre, samulnori. Note the convention I will adopt throughout this 12
13 book: SamulNori for the original quartet, retaining the romanised spelling that 13
14 they favour, but samulnori, without initial capitals, for the genre.¹ 14

15 Today, samulnori is, arguably, Korea's most successful traditional music. There 15
16 are many dozens of amateur and professional samulnori groups. Most groups 16
17 are private, but a number are based at the state-funded National Gugak Centre 17
18 in Seoul and in its satellite facilities around the country. There is an abundance 18
19 of samulnori workshops, festivals and contests. Samulnori is taught in many 19
20 state schools as well as in dedicated institutes. It features, to an extent, in the 20
21 state-sanctioned school curriculum, particularly at middle school level, and there 21
22 are many workbooks dedicated to helping wannabee 'samulnorians'.² Abroad, 22
23 samulnori is a familiar part of Korean performance troupes and Korean diasporic 23
24 activities, and samulnori groups exist in many universities, particularly where 24
25 there are substantial Korean or Korean heritage student populations. 25

26 The quartet, SamulNori, and the repertoire, samulnori, are recent evolutions 26
27 of something much older. Antecedents are encountered in local percussion bands, 27
28 known under the umbrella terms of *nongak* and *p'ungmul* and preserved as an icon 28
29 from Korea's past as Important Intangible Cultural Property (*Chungyo muhyōng* 29
30 *munhwajae*) 11, and in itinerant percussion troupes, notably Namsadang, preserved 30
31 as Important Intangible Cultural Property 3. Percussion bands are iconic to the 31
32 Korean soundscape. Popular opinion, as reported in one English-language Korean 32
33 newspaper, is that: 'First was Samul, and everywhere was rhythm, in percussion 33
34 bands, shaman rituals, and other traditional music' (*Korea Herald*, 25 January 34
35 1997). The first written document routinely cited by Korean commentators to 35
36 indicate a long history is the Chinese third-century source, *Sanguo zhi*. This 36

37
38
39 ¹ Rightly, the McCune-Reischauer romanisation reflecting the term's normative 38
40 Korean pronunciation would be *samullori* (Korean pronunciation elides 'l+n' to give 39
41 'l+l'), but using this here would introduce unnecessary complication. Given the number of 40
42 competing romanisation systems for Korean, additional alternatives may be encountered in 41
43 texts and on the Internet. 42

43 ² A term coined by the SamulNori quartet for students and participants at their 43
44 festivals and contests. 44

1 relates how the people of Mahan in the Korean peninsula (roughly, today's central 1
 2 Ch'ungch'ōng and southwestern Chōlla provinces) danced at night, stamping the 2
 3 ground and clapping to set rhythms (cited by, amongst many others, Kim Yang-gon 3
 4 1967: 5). Interpretation is required if one is to argue that this pertains to percussion 4
 5 bands. However, more than a millennium later, Chosŏn dynasty court records 5
 6 offer clear indications from, for instance, the eighteenth century, of what appear 6
 7 to be similar activities: '[Farmers] cheered those working or harvesting ... with 7
 8 [small and large] gongs!' 'When there are some farmers who are not active enough 8
 9 while everyone is working hard ... metallic gongs are sounded to cheer them up' 9
 10 (cited in Shin 1985a: 7–8).³ When Americans toured Korea at the beginning of the 10
 11 twentieth century looking for trade opportunities, they similarly found farming 11
 12 work accompanied by drums and gongs, as the following excerpt taken from a 12
 13 1906 document, the *Report on Agricultural Products of Korea*, illustrates: 13

14
 15 If there is anything which took us by surprise in the farming methods of 15
 16 Koreans ... We witnessed that music is played and singing is done to encourage 16
 17 the weeding work. Walking around the countryside in the weeding season in 17
 18 summer, one hears the sound of gongs ... Some farmers change from weeding to 18
 19 musical instruments and start playing exciting strains for the workers.⁴ 19

20
 21 The association of percussion with pre-modern Korea remains in contemporary 21
 22 takes on mythology and folklore, such as the following, written by Zo Zayong 22
 23 [Cho Chayong] to celebrate the tenth anniversary of the founding of SamulNori: 23

24
 25 A long, long time ago there lived deep in the mountains ... goblins who loved to 25
 26 play uproariously on drums and gongs every night. Their unceasing banging and 26
 27 pummelling earned them the nickname 'duduri' from the Korean verb 'to beat' 27
 28 or 'to strike' (Zo 1988: 38–9). 28

29
 30 Zo (1926–2000) was a champion of Korean folklore.⁵ 30

31 Today, domestic and foreign concerts of Korean troupes routinely end with a 31
 32 full company dance to drums and gongs that the audience is encouraged to join in 32
 33 with. Equally, and for decades, demonstrations by Korean workers and students 33
 34 have been choreographed to drums and gongs (see, e.g., Catherine In-young 34
 35 Lee 2012). At the 2010 World Cup in South Africa, the 'red devil' supporters of 35
 36 the South Korean team challenged the dominance of plastic *vuvuzela* trumpets 36
 37 with drums and gongs. Again, drums and gongs were much in evidence at the 37

38

39 ³ The original sources are *Sŭngjŏngwŏn ilgi, kwŏn* (chapter or fascicle) 881, and 39
 40 *Yŏngjo shillok, kwŏn* 47. The first of these, documents from the Royal Secretariat, dates to 40
 41 1737, while the second dates to 1738, the fourteenth year of Yŏngjo's reign (r.1724–1776). 41

42 ⁴ Cited from Howard (1990: 234). 42

43 ⁵ <http://zozayong.com/> (accessed 2 April 2014) celebrates Zo's life and work; see also 43
 44 Deutsch (1997). 44

1 2002 World Cup in Seoul (and in Japan).⁶ Much the same punctuates almost any
 2 Korean festival or sporting event and features in almost any dance production. 2
 3 Back in 1993, 1,100 drummers created aural mayhem at the Taejŏn EXPO in what 3
 4 they termed the ‘Big Bang SamulNori’. This was an evolution of the massive 4
 5 percussion display at the opening ceremony of the 1988 Seoul Olympics, which 5
 6 in turn had developed from large Korean percussion forces deployed for Paik 6
 7 Nam June’s *Bye Bye Kipling* at the 1986 Beijing Asian Games. The original plan 7
 8 for the Seoul Olympics was for percussion bands to accompany performers and 8
 9 VIPs in a 20-minute procession from the riverside dock to the Olympic stadium 9
 10 in Chamshil, joining as a 1,252-drummer ‘passage at dawn’ within the opening 10
 11 ceremony. Scaled down, the mass drummers at the event, who were made up 11
 12 largely of military conscripts, took to multiple sets of the four characteristic 12
 13 percussion band drums and gongs (Dilling 2007: 29–31).⁷ 13

14 SamulNori/samulnori uses the four core instruments of local percussion 14
 15 bands. These are the ‘four things’ (*samul*) referred to in the name itself, although 15
 16 the meaning of the Sino-Korean characters behind the two syllables, which in 16
 17 earlier times had a Buddhist connotation and applied to different percussive 17
 18 instruments typically found at Korean temples, is extended with the new genre. 18
 19 ‘*Nori*’, the purely Korean second half of the name, has the meaning ‘to play’. 19
 20 The four SamulNori/samulnori instruments are the *kkwaenggwari* small hand-held 20
 21 gong, the *changgo* (or *changgu*) double-headed hourglass-shaped drum, the *puk* 21
 22 squashed barrel drum and the *ching* large hand-held gong. Most of the SamulNori/ 22
 23 samulnori repertory is performed seated, while local bands once stood and danced; 23
 24 hence, where in local bands the large gong would be held by a rope or cord in 24
 25 one hand, in samulnori it is normally hung in a frame. For most of the samulnori 25
 26 repertory one of each instrument is played, although in specific pieces the quartet 26
 27 will take four hourglass drums or two players will take small gongs. There were 27
 28 leaders of each instrument in both local percussion bands and itinerant troupes, 28
 29 and such bands and troupes typically had ranks of performers for each instrument. 29
 30 In performance, the small gong gave rhythmic models, the large gong the 30
 31 underpinning foundations, and the barrel drum accented and expanded on the large 31
 32 gong foundations. This is much as it happens today in samulnori, but samulnori 32
 33 tends to foreground the hourglass drum and its player rather than the small gong and 33
 34 its player. In part this reflects the fame and popularity of one particular hourglass 34
 35 drum player, one of the founder members of the first SamulNori quartet, Kim Duk 35
 36 Soo (b.1952).⁸ However, the shift in focus also reflects the drum’s potential to 36
 37 feature complex patterning, and its ability to demonstrate greater virtuosity than 37
 38 _____ 38

39 ⁶ Korean percussion bands were dispatched around the world prior to the 2002 World 39
 40 Cup; one of my then doctoral students, Simon Mills, filmed a band performing on the pitch 40
 41 before a Crystal Palace football match at Selhurst Park in September 2001. 41

42 ⁷ See also Dilling 2007: Chapter 1 *passim*; 263–4 and Chapter 6 *passim*. 42

43 ⁸ Kim Tŏksu would be the McCune-Reischauer romanisation. Here, and throughout 43
 44 the text, I use personal preferred spellings where the person concerned is well known abroad, 44

1 the other instruments. This becomes important in a genre such as samulnori, since 1
 2 it was developed specifically for staged performance. In samulnori, the hourglass 2
 3 drum player uses, as he/she has since at least the middle of the twentieth century 3
 4 in local bands and itinerant troupes, two sticks: a thin whip-like *yŏl ch'ae* to echo 4
 5 the small gong and a mallet-like *kunggul ch'ae* or *kung ch'ae* to fill in the large 5
 6 gong foundations. 6

7 Samulnori is rhythm. It is my view that the focus on rhythm challenges many 7
 8 of the assumptions about musical structures that pertain to Western popular and art 8
 9 music based on harmony and melody, and demands distinct analytical tools well 9
 10 removed from those that prevail in musicology (Howard 1991/2; see also Barker 10
 11 2011, 2015). One piece of the samulnori repertory continues to be performed 11
 12 standing and dancing, and in this a small hand-held drum, the *sogo*, is added to the 12
 13 quartet of instruments. A melodic instrument can also appear: the shawm known 13
 14 as *hojŏk* or *soaenap*, *nallari* or *t'aep'yŏngso* – where *hojŏk* denotes an origin that 14
 15 allies the instrument to the ‘barbaric’ tribes on China’s western borders, *soaenap* 15
 16 indicates the metal bell, *nallari* is onomatopoeia for the strident nasal sound the 16
 17 shawm produces and *t'aep'yŏngso* translates as ‘great peace pipe’. The shawm 17
 18 player improvises around known tunes, keeping to the rhythmic frame given by 18
 19 the percussion quartet. 19

20 Each samulnori piece is compact in the sense that each comprises a fixed and 20
 21 tightly controlled series of discrete episodes. An episode is built from a single 21
 22 rhythmic cycle that typically has the duration of a single metric measure, but 22
 23 which may include a sequence of motifs built from a set of variant patterns based 23
 24 on the rhythmic cycle frame, played end to end. Variant patterns add additional 24
 25 notes, increase texture density, and gradually up the tempo in a kaleidoscope of 25
 26 colour. Each pattern comprises a set of small units, typically binary or ternary cells. 26
 27 Every episode in a *samulnori* piece ultimately derives from local band or itinerant 27
 28 troupe repertory from the past, and will be juxtaposed with other episodes from the 28
 29 same repertory or from different sources. In other words, the sequence of episodes 29
 30 within any given piece juxtaposes discrete patterns that once functioned for one 30
 31 or more ritual, entertainment and/or work activity in one or more Korean area or 31
 32 region. The result is a bricolage, but one in which each piece exhibits an over- 32
 33 arching structural unity. Each piece, however, requires players to develop fluency 33
 34 and a shared aesthetic that moves beyond instrumental technique to incorporate 34
 35 breathing and body movement. In contrast, local percussion bands and itinerant 35
 36 troupes had (and have) larger memberships that tended (and tend) to accommodate 36
 37 performers with very different skill levels. Bands and troupes presented (and 37
 38 present) music that was (and is) more expansive, less fast, less virtuosic, and, in 38
 39 terms of rhythmic variation, more flexible. There was (and to an extent, still is) 39
 40 less of a shared breathing and movement aesthetic. Older incarnations, though, 40
 41 struggle to fit onto proscenium stages, unlike samulnori. 41

42 _____ 42
 43 but retain the East Asian order of family name before given name rather than complicate 43
 44 matters further by switching to the Western order with family name last. 44

1	Performing Samulnori	1
2		2
3	Samulnori is, essentially, urban. Percussion bands and itinerant troupes date from 3	
4	a time when the majority of the population lived and worked in the countryside. 4	
5	The decline of bands and troupes can be mapped onto modernisation and 5	
6	urbanisation, aspects that in Korea date largely from post-Korean War economic 6	
7	expansion. So, samulnori evolved as part of a concert culture intended to appeal 7	
8	to the rapidly growing middle class population of urban centres such as Seoul. 8	
9	This population was becoming increasingly affluent, and while it collected the 9	
10	accoutrements of modernity it paused for breath, developing nostalgia for a past 10	
11	that was fast being lost. In a nutshell, I argue that Koreans have in recent decades 11	
12	bought into a perceived need to bring traditional music to the public in formats and 12	
13	at venues designed on the basis of – and therefore to compete alongside – Western 13	
14	equivalents.	14
15	With state support, notably through the government-funded National Gugak 15	
16	Centre (in Korean, both under its current and former English names, the Kungnip 16	
17	Kugagwŏn), efforts had been made through much of the later twentieth century 17	
18	to stage age-old court and literati musics of the ‘high’ tradition (to use a term 18	
19	familiar from discussions of cultural production and consumption throughout East 19	
20	Asia). But, it was felt that new ways to present folk music – the ‘low’ tradition – in 20	
21	comparable formats were needed. Hence, performance spaces that were built in 21	
22	Seoul during the later decades of the twentieth century needed to accommodate 22	
23	both the grandiose – Western ballet and opera, with Korean equivalents being 23	
24	<i>ch’anggŭk</i> opera and its relations ⁹ as evolutions of the more traditional <i>p’ansori</i> 24	
25	epic storytelling through song, new orchestras of traditional instruments, and 25	
26	so on – and the more intimate solo instrumental and vocal recitals and chamber 26	
27	groups. The new showcase performance spaces opened as palaces to modernity, 27	
28	but they needed to partner the grandiose with something more intimate. Hence, the 28	
29	three Seoul performance complexes built in the 1970s, the Sejong Cultural Centre 29	
30	(Sejong Munhwa Hoegwan), the National Theatre (Kungnip Kŭkch’ang) and the 30	
31	Korean Culture and Arts Foundation’s Munye Theatre (Munye Kŭkch’ang; today, 31	
32	the ARKO Theatre) all had both large and compact performance spaces. Rural 32	
33	percussion bands and itinerant troupes had traditionally played in large outdoor 33	
34	venues; they were destined to struggle to fit onto theatre stages.	34
35	Much of Korea’s musical tradition is appropriate to intimate environments, 35	
36	and this was only partly accommodated as the urban middle class patronised the 36	
37	new performance complexes. An increasing number of small and typically private 37	
38	performance spaces opened, to provide alternative venues. One such venue was 38	
39	the Space Theatre (Konggan Sarang), built between the former royal gardens of 39	
40	Piwŏn (often romanised as ‘Biwon’) and the lively artistic quarter of Insadong 40	
41	(once known to a generation of foreigners as ‘Mary’s Alley’). It was here that 41	
42	SamulNori first took to the stage.	42
43		43
44	⁹ For which, see Killick (2010).	44

1 From Seoul, the genre of samulnori spread outwards. At home, its popularity 1
 2 was aided by the next stage of the development of concert culture, which involved 2
 3 building regional cultural centres. Regional centres required ‘acts’ to fill their 3
 4 stages. The new genre was also promoted through festivals, workshops, and 4
 5 the production of recordings and notation-based workbooks. It was taken up by 5
 6 regional schools and by groups, particularly where the local percussion bands of 6
 7 old had died out. Abroad, it became part of the burgeoning international concert 7
 8 scene for non-Western music: samulnori was found to be immensely approachable 8
 9 in a way that other genres of Korean music were not. In writing this, I have in 9
 10 mind Orientalism as it was conceived of by Edward Said, wherein the ‘Other’ is 10
 11 matched to the familiar,¹⁰ and in which rhythm as an irreducible part of the body 11
 12 and through which humankind experiences the world¹¹ proved less challenging 12
 13 than unfamiliar melodic and modal soundworlds. 13

14 As music for a quartet, samulnori proved eminently portable. It was ideally 14
 15 suited to indoor stages, and was sufficiently compact to fit small stages (even 15
 16 if extremely loud!). It neatly fit the presentation aspects of contemporary urban 16
 17 concert culture, and did so far better than the repertoires of local percussion bands 17
 18 and itinerant troupes. However, as much as it was readily appreciable by a broader 18
 19 cross-cultural audience than other Korean folk and court music genres, at home 19
 20 it was often considered to stand at a considerable remove from older forms. This 20
 21 was particularly so amongst local musicians and amongst students who associated 21
 22 themselves with the *minjung munhwa* popular culture movement that fought for 22
 23 democracy against the military dictatorships of the 1970s and 1980s. I will argue 23
 24 below that this distancing was exacerbated because much journalism and scholarship 24
 25 allied the original SamulNori quartet to itinerant troupes. Coupled to an academic 25
 26 discourse that at times evoked notions of Hobsbawm’s ‘invented traditions’ (1983) 26
 27 or, to use Andrew Killick’s phrase, notions of the ‘traditionesque’ (Killick 2003, 27
 28 2010: xxi and 213), this set up a paradox in which the very popularity of samulnori 28
 29 29

30 ¹⁰ After Edward Said (1978). The conceptions I refer to here are those applied 30
 31 to music in many of the chapters in Martin Clayton and Bennett Zon’s edited volume, 31
 32 *Music and Orientalism in the British Empire, 1780s–1940s* (2007); much the same would 32
 33 apply to Timothy Taylor’s (2007) understanding of consumerist ‘world music’. See also 33
 34 Howard (2009a), in which my theoretical understanding of world music is outlined, using a 34
 35 framework that challenges the world systems’ models of William Outhwaite and Immanuel 35
 36 Wallerstein. 36

37 ¹¹ Without wishing to confuse biological and perceptual conceptions of rhythm, or 37
 38 to somehow validate Carl Sachs’s pithy paraphrase of van Bulow (‘in the beginning was 38
 39 rhythm’; Sachs 1953), a somewhat simplistic and antiquated citation from Carl Seashore 39
 40 would seem to be appropriate: ‘Rhythm, whether in perception or action, is emotional when 40
 41 highly developed, and results in the response of the whole organism to its pulsations. When 41
 42 we listen to the dashing billows or the trickling raindrops, when we see the swaying of trees 42
 43 in the wind or the waving of wheat fields, we respond to these, we feel ourselves into them, 43
 44 and there is rhythm everywhere, not only in every plastic part of our body’ (Seashore 1938). 43
 44 I have elsewhere discussed Korean conceptions of rhythm (Howard 2006a). 44

1 was challenged by questioning its authenticity. And moving to the present, this, as 1
 2 I will argue, adds a peculiar and problematic dimension to discussions of how the 2
 3 genre can be maintained and transmitted to future generations. 3
 4 Samulnori has, though, proved immensely flexible. This, too, adds to the 4
 5 paradox. Quartets have collaborated with jazz musicians, singers and shaman 5
 6 ritualists. They have entered the Korean pop charts accompanying rap singers. 6
 7 They have adapted repertory developed for other ensembles or instruments and 7
 8 made it work on the four percussion instruments, and have premiered compositions 8
 9 for samulnori quartets and orchestras of Western and Korean instruments. An 9
 10 intriguing example of adaptation is the samulnori piece ‘*Samdo sŏl changgo*’, 10
 11 which substantially differs in structure from drum dances that previously were a 11
 12 part of the repertoires of local bands and itinerant troupes, as well as from the drum 12
 13 dances performed from the early twentieth century onwards by pretty girls on 13
 14 urban stages. The piece is closely allied to the structure of another genre entirely, 14
 15 the solo melodic instrumental genre of *sanjo*.¹² Such a degree of flexibility and 15
 16 adaptability can challenge understandings of preservation and change that have 16
 17 become the zeitgeist of much cultural promotion today, and the arguments that 17
 18 persist between either preserving without change or maintaining a genre or style 18
 19 by allowing creativity and development (Howard 2012: 1–18). Is it, we could 19
 20 well ask in respect to samulnori, necessary for a canon of pieces to be sustained 20
 21 into the future or can, in the course of time, existing pieces be transformed into 21
 22 substantially new repertory influenced by different music genres with local and 22
 23 international roots? 23
 24 24
 25 25
 26 **Literature and Recordings** 26
 27 27
 28 Korea is a highly literate culture, and its many prestigious universities produce 28
 29 copious quantities of scholarly publications. Despite this, although much has 29
 30 been written about SamulNori/samulnori precursors, many of the Korean sources 30
 31 published after the year 1978 when SamulNori made their debut have surprisingly 31
 32 continued to omit all mention of the contemporary quartet. This illustrates how 32
 33 persistent the scholarly questioning of the new genre’s authenticity has proven to 33
 34 be. Publications on percussion bands that omit SamulNori/samulnori include Ch’oe 34
 35 Chongmin (2002), Ch’oe Sangsu (1985), Chŏn Inp’yŏng (1979), Chŏng Pyŏnggho 35
 36 (1985, 1986, 1992), Chŏng Pyŏnggho et al. (1982, 1985), Chu Yŏngja (1981, 1985), 36
 37 37
 38 _____ 38
 39 ¹² For an account of *sanjo*, see Howard, Lee and Casswell (2008). Kim Duk Soo has 39
 40 in recent years developed his own *changgo sanjo* for the hourglass drum. He has told me 40
 41 in conversation that he has recorded this, but has at the time of writing yet to release the 41
 42 recording. Earlier but shorter forays into such a piece, lacking structural similarity (that is, 42
 43 lacking the characteristic slow to fast progression within movements and from beginning to 43
 44 end, and lacking the multi-movement overall form of *sanjo* proper), are recorded on Kim 44
 44 Soochul’s album, *Guitar Sanjo* (Living Sound 2002). 44

1 Han'guk hyangt'osa (1994, 1997), Kim Hyönsuk (1991), Kim Iktu et al. (1994), 1
 2 Kim Inu (1987), Kim Uhyön (1984), Kim Wönho (1999), Kim Yöngt'ak (2002), 2
 3 Kwön Hüidök (1981, 1995), No Kwangil (1985), No Poksun (1993), Ryu Muyöl 3
 4 (1983, 1986), Shin Yong-ha (1985a/b), Yi Pohyöng (1984), Yi Sangjin (2002) and 4
 5 Yi Sora and Chöng Sumi (2000). SamulNori/samulnori also appears to be absent 5
 6 from many of the MA and PhD theses about percussion bands produced at Korean 6
 7 universities in the 1980s and 1990s, including An Hyeyöng (1986), Ch'oe T'aeyöl 7
 8 (1984), Kim Chiyöng (1987), Kim Hakchu (1987), Kim Hyönsuk (1987), Kim 8
 9 Okhüi (1985), O Chongsöp (1989), Son Pyöngu (1988), Söng Chaehyöng (1984), 9
 10 U Chwamiyangja (1999), Yi Chongjin (1996), Yi Chöngno (1998), Yi Yöngbae 10
 11 (2000) and Yu Kyöngok (1987).¹³ Material on itinerant troupes tends to be focused 11
 12 on narrow accounts of troupe history, and so has little need to connect directly 12
 13 to the quartet. This is the case in most of the publications by Shim Usöng (e.g., 13
 14 1974a, 1974b, 1980, 1985, [Shim Woo-sung] 1997), although one of Shim's books 14
 15 (Shim 1998) and a volume written by Ch'oe T'aehyön (1993) do make explicit 15
 16 connections. Amongst non-Koreans, Robert C. Provine's work has focused on 16
 17 local percussion band music, and primarily on a solo drum dance learnt from a 17
 18 specific teacher, Kim Pyöngsöp (Provine 1975, 1982, 1985); the same repertory is 18
 19 considered by Chön Inp'yöng (1979), Chu Yöngja (1981, 1985), myself (Howard 19
 20 1983a/b) and, although somewhat tangentially, in articles by the Ohio-based 20
 21 *p'ansori* singer, performer and scholar Chan E. Park (2011, 2012). 21

22 There is, nonetheless, a growing body of work on SamulNori/samulnori. This 22
 23 includes most importantly four volumes by Kim Hönsön (1988, 1991, 1995, 1998). 23
 24 SamulNori/samulnori members have produced books of notations and workbooks, 24
 25 including, from the founding quartet, three volumes plus one in English translation 25
 26 (Korean Conservatorium of Performing Arts/Han'guk chönt'ong yesul yönju 26
 27 pojonhoe 1990, 1992, 1993, 1995). Three volumes feature samulnori practice 27
 28 at the state-sponsored National Gugak Centre (Ch'oe Pyöngsam 2000; Ch'oe 28
 29 Pyöngsam and Ch'oe Hön 1992; Lee Young-Gwang 2009). Accounts of the 29
 30 genre by SamulNori members and associates include two associated with Kim 30
 31 Duk Soo's disciple Kim Dong-Won (Kim Duk Soo 1999; Kim Tongwön 2003¹⁴), 31
 32 two volumes celebrating the tenth anniversary of the quartet's first performance 32
 33 published by Art Space (1988a, 1988b), and a slim volume produced to celebrate 33
 34 the thirtieth anniversary (SamulNori Hannullim 2009).¹⁵ There are a number of 34
 35 MA theses on the genre, which broadly speaking began to appear in the 1990s. 35
 36 These include Kim Taegyün (1990), Yu Munshik (1990), U Ch'önmi (1996), Nam 36
 37 Soi (1997), Pang Sünghwan (1997), Yi Pömmi (1998), Kim Hyönsuk (1999).¹⁶ 37

38 _____ 38
 39 ¹³ As cited by Shingil Park (2000) and Hesselink (2006). 39

40 ¹⁴ Note a further refinement of the convention I follow for personal names: I retain 40
 41 McCune-Reischauer romanisations where a cited publication is written only in Korean. 41

42 ¹⁵ Art Space was set up following the death of Kim Sugün (1931–1986), the founder 42
 43 of Space – and the Space Theatre – by his former colleagues and staff. 43

44 ¹⁶ As cited by Shingil Park (2000). 44

1 Many theses, and more than I have space to list here, were completed in the first 1
 2 decade of the new millennium, and some of them began to abandon the boundaries 2
 3 between the new genre and its antecedents; these provide the sources for Kim 3
 4 In Suk's research discussed in Chapter 5 below. Amongst non-Koreans, Nathan 4
 5 Hesselink and I have both published extensively on both local percussion bands 5
 6 and SamulNori/samulnori (e.g., Hesselink 1998a, 1998b, 1999, 2001a, 2001b, 6
 7 2004, 2006, 2012; Howard 1983a/b, 1989a/b, 1990, 1991/92, 1997a, 2002, 2006a, 7
 8 2006c). This book develops my earlier work and is indebted to Hesselink's recent 8
 9 account (2012), although Hesselink follows Shim Usŏng and Ch'oe T'aehyŏn in 9
 10 making a central link between SamulNori and itinerant troupes – a path that I am 10
 11 reluctant to follow. 11

12 The first commercial recording of samulnori was issued as a vinyl disc released 12
 13 in the USA in 1984, titled *Samul-Nori: Drums and Voices of Korea* (Nonesuch 13
 14 Explorer Series 72093). Later, this was released on LP and then on CD in Seoul 14
 15 (e.g., Oasis ORC-1041, 1991). This first album featured the four initial pieces 15
 16 premiered by the founding quartet. A second quartet, established at the National 16
 17 Gugak Centre and initially led by one of the founding quartet's former members, 17
 18 Kim Yongbae (1953–1986), recorded a cassette issued in Berlin as part of the 18
 19 Horizonte '85 Festival, then released an album in Seoul in April 1986, *Samulnori* 19
 20 (Jigu JCDS-0050). Both of these, and a series of subsequent recordings, feature 20
 21 the set of pieces that I identify within this volume as a samulnori canon. Additional 21
 22 recordings of the canon include: *SamulNori* (Sony 32DG64), recorded during 22
 23 the founding quartet's tour of Japan in 1986; *SamulNori* (SKC, SKCD-K-0326), 23
 24 released in 1987 and again a year later to mark the founding quartet's tenth 24
 25 anniversary; *Samulnori: A Selection of Korean Traditional Music Vol.20/* 25
 26 *Samulnori. Han'guk ūmak sŏnjip 20* (Jigu JCDS-0319–0320, 1992), on which 26
 27 it could be said that the National Gugak Centre's own samulnori team came of 27
 28 age; *National Classical Music Institute Samulnori/Samulnori: 93-iryŏ myŏngin* 28
 29 *myŏngch'angjŏn 3* (Cantabile SRCD-1186, 1994), based on live recordings made 29
 30 in 1993 at one of a series of concerts featuring 'master musicians and singers' 30
 31 and given a title that references an earlier name for the Centre; and *Kim Duk Soo* 31
 32 *SamulNori* (King SYNCD-114–115, 1995). This last, a double CD set, included 32
 33 six of the seven canonic pieces, and was intended to provide model performances 33
 34 of each, hence each was given in an extended format. It is no exaggeration to say 34
 35 that the performances on this double CD remain the yardsticks by which other 35
 36 musicians measure their own skills. 36

37 A multitude of other recordings exist that feature selected, often short, versions 37
 38 of canonic pieces. At times, these are used as cement, either to bind samulnori to 38
 39 other music worlds such as jazz or as fillers between more substantial improvised 39
 40 repertoires. Briefly, this is what happens on the first three recordings that chart 40
 41 SamulNori's excursions into jazz collaborations: *SXL Live in Japan* (Terrapin 41
 42 32DH824, 1987), *SXL: Into the Outlands* (Celluloid CELD5017, 1987), and *Red Sun/* 42
 43 *SamulNori* (Amadeo 841 222-1, 1989, re-mastered as Polygram DZ-2433, 1997). 43
 44 A further album transferred lessons learnt from jazz back to the percussion frame, 44

1 *SamulNori Record of Changes* (CMP CD3002, 1988 and Rhizome Sketch RZF1002, 1
 2 1989). Here, though, the glue was shaman and Buddhist ritual music rendered on 2
 3 the percussion instruments rather than the samulnori canon. Shaman influence is 3
 4 also apparent on SamulNori's single contribution to *A Week in the Real World – 4*
 5 *Part 1* (Real World/Virgin CDRW25, 1992). Put down during a week's residence 5
 6 at Peter Gabriel's recording studio following the quartet's appearance at the British 6
 7 WOMAD festival, this uses East Coast shaman ritual material. Shaman rituals proved 7
 8 a rich vein for the founding quartet, leading to a double CD release, *Spirit of Nature 8*
 9 (Nanjang TE004-01, 2001). Jazz collaborations provided another productive path, 9
 10 particularly in three additional albums produced during a decade-long partnership 10
 11 with the Austrian group Red Sun: *Then Comes the White Tiger* (ECM ECM-1499, 11
 12 1994), *Nanjang: A New Horizon* (King Records KSC-4150A, 1995), and *From the 12*
 13 *Earth, to the Sky* (Samsung Music SCO-123ABN, 1997 and 1998). 13

14 Reflecting samulnori's considerable popularity, many other recordings 14
 15 exist, featuring music situated somewhere between canonic realisations and 15
 16 new creativity. Those featuring the group Durae Pae Samulnori are notable. 16
 17 Durae Pae's first album consisted primarily of compressed canonic renditions: 17
 18 *Samulnori. Durae Pae Samulnori: The Best Traditional Dance and Music Troupe 18*
 19 *of Korea* (Seorabul KCD-007, 1987). Standing at a certain distance from this, 19
 20 Durae Pae's second album mixed four canonic pieces with two newly composed 20
 21 tracks (*Durae-Pae Samulnori. Che-1 chip*; Sorimadang SCD-0008, 1993), while 21
 22 their third and fourth added synthesisers, guitars and backing vocals to create an 22
 23 easy listening sound that was at the time much in vogue following an easing of 23
 24 restrictions on imports that saw Koreans turn to New Age soundworlds (*Durae- 24*
 25 *Pae Samulnori. Che-2 chip* and *Che-3 chip*; Sorimadang SCD-0009–0010, 1993). 25
 26 Space militates against a more complete listing of recordings here, although more 26
 27 will be discussed as this volume progresses. 27

28
 29

30 **Conventions** 30
 31 31

32 The original quartet and the genre it spawned share a name, hence the convention 32
 33 adopted throughout this volume: SamulNori for the quartet, retaining the romanised 33
 34 spelling that they favour, but samulnori for the genre. 34

35 Where appropriate, I have adjusted the grammar of interview quotations in 35
 36 the belief that everyone we interview has the right for their words to be rendered 36
 37 adequately. I use British spellings. As with most publications by foreign scholars 37
 38 on Korea, but with the exceptions already noted, I use the McCune-Reischauer 38
 39 romanisation system for Korean terms, as modified by the Korean Ministry of 39
 40 Education in 1988 ('shi' rather than 'si', to reflect pronunciation). The accuracy 40
 41 of this system is such that it allows the ready substitution of Korean script and 41
 42 therefore makes a character glossary redundant; indeed, my reason to use McCune- 42
 43 Reischauer is to allow materials I have cited to be found in library collections and 43
 44 recorded music archives around the world. It also allows foreigners to attempt a 44

1 reasonable pronunciation of a Korean word or name.¹⁷ Although I render personal 1
 2 names given in Korean in published sources in McCune-Reischauer, without 2
 3 hyphenation, I have respected preferred spellings of names where these are printed, 3
 4 where a composition, publication, or recording is distributed in the international 4
 5 market, or where the person is well known beyond Korea. Only if it would facilitate 5
 6 cross-checking do I add McCune-Reischauer equivalents in square brackets on 6
 7 the first occurrence of a person's name rendered using a different romanisation 7
 8 system. English titles to albums and pieces/recordings are left as printed; English 8
 9 translations are given only where these are provided in a publication or recording. 9
 10 Titles of compositions and pieces are given in parentheses, with the Korean 10
 11 preceding an English translation or transliteration where needed. 'Seoul' is the 11
 12 accepted romanisation for the South Korean capital city. 12

13 Like most non-Korean scholars, I remain reluctant to use the romanisation 13
 14 system that has been promoted from Seoul during the last decade. I do not dispute 14
 15 that this system works for Koreans, but it relies on syllabary that too often has 15
 16 unfortunate connotations for those brought up speaking European languages, 16
 17 with the effect that it can undermine efforts to promote Korea to an international 17
 18 audience. An example of this is the English name used by what is in Korean the 18
 19 Kungnip Kugagwŏn: National Gugak Centre. '*Kugak*', the McCune-Reischauer 19
 20 version of today's '*gugak*', avoids intimating American slang. I also note that there 20
 21 is as yet little consistency in the use of the 'new' romanisation, not least since 21
 22 there are a number of other systems still circulating. For example, consider the 22
 23 SamulNori/samulnori instruments: the *kkwaenggwari* can also be encountered as 23
 24 the *kwenggwari*, *kwengwari*, *k'wengwari* and much more (and also, because of 24
 25 the primary material used to produce the alloy from which it is made, as the *soe* 25
 26 ('iron') or *sangsoe* ('lead iron')); the three additional instruments are regularly 26
 27 rendered as *janggo/janggu*, *buk* and *jing*. Again, individually preferred spellings 27
 28 of personal names may follow any one of the systems that has existed during 28
 29 the last 60 years, or not at all, and, to complicate matters further, a composer or 29
 30 author may use several different romanised versions of their name, sometimes 30
 31 hyphenating the second and third syllables, sometimes eliding together and 31
 32 sometimes separating the syllables, sometimes giving an initial capital to the third 32
 33 syllable and sometimes not. 33

34 Finally, while in the pages below some notation will be encountered, those 34
 35 wishing to learn samulnori should refer to the three workbooks (with one also 35
 36 available in English) produced by SamulNori in the 1990s: Korean Conservatorium 36
 37 of Performing Arts/Han'guk chŏnt'ong yesul yŏnju pojonhoe 1990, 1992, 1993, 37
 38 1995), to the three notation texts reflecting samulnori practice at the National 38

39 _____ 39
 40 ¹⁷ At a recent auction, I bought a silk scarf. This was issued by the US Airforce to its 40
 41 pilots in 1951, during the Korean War, and it has a double-sided map of Korea printed on it. 41
 42 All the place names are printed in McCune-Reischauer romanisation, and I like to imagine 42
 43 that, if a pilot was shot down and had to make his way across enemy lines or to take shelter 43
 44 in a Korean village, at least he would have been able to pronounce the place names. 44

1	Gugak Centre (Ch'oe Pyöngsam 2000; Ch'oe Pyöngsam and Ch'oe Hön 1992; 1	1
2	Lee Young-Gwang 2009), or to additional notations and workbooks that will 2	2
3	doubtless appear after this book has gone to press. 3	3
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