

# KAMSA CHRONICLE

Kee H. Kim, Publisher

A. Yangwon Jackson, Editor

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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Kee H. Kim, M.D.



Another exciting year, the 12th for KAMSA, lies straight ahead.

To start, it is with great pleasure that I introduce to you our new conductor for the Youth Orchestra, Maestro James Song, Professor of Music at Moor Park College. He brings the ultimate in professionalism and musicianship to our organization. We are truly fortunate to have him. KAMSA Youth Orchestra will perform at Spangenberg Theatre on Saturday, September 8th. Our Gala Benefit Dinner Concert on April 20<sup>th</sup> will feature direct from Korea kayageum virtuoso, Professor Jiyoung Yi. In November, one of today's most promising violinists, Ju-Young Baek, will be our artist for the Herbst Theatre Debut Recital.

Beethoven once said, "Music is the only bodiless entry into a higher world of knowledge which comprehends mankind, but is not comprehended by it." As always, our mission is to help young Korean-American musicians. Only with community involvement and the invaluable help of our individual supporters can this important work continue. Thank you!

### THIRD GALA BENEFIT DINNER CONCERT on April 20, 2001

The elegant venue for our third annual Benefit Dinner Concert will again be the exclusive Stanford University Faculty Club. The significance of this event cannot be overstated as the proceeds will constitute the lion's share of KAMSA's annual budget. The evening's festivities will commence with cocktails and hord'oeuvres. Next comes the featured performance of the kayageum master, Jiyoung Yi. She will play Kayageum Sanjo\*. The night will be capped off by a truly exceptional dining experience. Please mark your calendar for this black-tie affair on Friday, April 20, 2001 at 6:30 PM. For further information, please contact Sung Cho at (408) 866-6770.

### KAMSA YOUTH ORCHESTRA AUDITION FOR 2001

Date:	Saturday, May 19, 2001
Time:	8:00 AM to 4:00 PM
Place:	Daesung Presbyterian Church 425 Tasman Dr., Sunnyvale
Instruments:	All orchestral instruments
Audition:	One piece of choice and sight reading
Soloists:	All instruments, for 10 minutes
Audition Fee:	\$10.00 for orchestra members \$20.00 for soloists
Age:	Through senior year of high school
Performance Date:	Saturday, September 8, 2001 at 8 PM
Performance Place:	Spangenberg Theatre in Palo Alto
Contact Person:	Mela Hwang, (650) 948-5797



\*The kayageum, a 12-string plucked instrument, first came into existence in the Kaya Kingdom around the 6th century. The wooden board is made of paulownia wood, and movable bridges are in the shape of the foot of a wild goose. These bridges support 12 silk strings. Sanjo is a solo instrumental piece which developed from the music of the Southern region of Korea. It has numerous sections, each of which is based on a different rhythmic pattern. It begins very slowly and gradually accelerates. Each player can vary the length of the piece. Professor Yi will play a shorter version of Byung-ho Kim School Sanjo. [Notes by Hyo-shin Na]

## HERBST THEATRE DEBUT RECITAL OF PIANIST MINYOUNG LEE, November 12, 2000

Pianist Minyoung Lee gave a spell-binding performance at our annual Herbst Theatre Debut Recital on November 12, 2000. John McCarthy of the S.F. Conservatory of Music wrote in his review published over the



internet that her playing was "mesmerizing, magically played, filled with spirit and energy, technically formidable, with extraordinary sensitivity, masterful...."

Congratulations on a job well done that was so well received. We are proud of our Korean-American musicians and feel honored to help promote their careers.

## A FOND FAREWELL TO MAESTRO LAWRENCE KOHL

Maestro Lawrence Kohl conducted our Youth Orchestra for three seasons, 1998-2000. His leadership helped the orchestra grow, both in size and quality. We are very grateful for his service to our young musicians. The whole Korean community of the greater Bay Area thanks him and wishes him continued success.



## PASSING OF THE BATON

All of us at KAMSA are honored to introduce our new conductor for the KAMSA Youth Orchestra, Professor James Song.

James Song, Professor of Music at Moorpark College in Southern California, founded and has conducted the Moorpark Symphony Orchestra since 1991. It has already set the standard for such community orchestras far and wide. Prof. Song received his Bachelor of Music Education and Master of Music in Instrumental Conducting from the University of Colorado at Boulder. He studied conducting with Lynn Whitten, Allan McMurray,

## 2001 HERBST THEATRE DEBUT RECITAL

Our annual Herbst Theatre recital will take place on Saturday, November 10, 2001 featuring violinist Ju-Young Baek. She was hailed by The Washington Post as showing "keen insight and astonishing skill, languishing tone and luminous buoyancy." Ju-Young Baek is one of the most promising young violinists of today.

She won first prize in the Young Concert Artists International Auditions in 2000, a Bronze Medal at the 1998 International Violin Competition of Indianapolis, First Prize at the 1997 Dong-A International Violin Competition in Seoul, Korea (the first international violin competition ever held in Korea), top prizes from the 1996 International Paganini Violin Competition and the 1995 International Sibelius Violin Competition.



Photo: Christian Steiner

Her performances as soloist with orchestras throughout the world include The London Symphony Orchestra, The Philadelphia Orchestra, The Tokyo Symphony, The Singapore Symphony, and the KBS Orchestra, as well as orchestras in France, Norway, Finland, and Russia.

Please mark your calendar for this exceptional event. Your attendance and support are critical for promoting the careers of such outstanding Korean musical artists.

and Giora Bernstein. From 1985 through 1991 he conducted a number of high school bands and orchestras. Currently Mr. Song is working on a Ph.D. through USC. Besides leading the Moorpark College Symphony Orchestra, he is a conductor of the Galilee Choir at Young Nak Presbyterian Church in Los Angeles and conductor of the Young Nak Youth Orchestra.

We look forward to consummate professionalism and leadership from Prof. Song. May God bless our new conductor and continue to prosper our youth orchestra. For a more personal encounter with James Song readers will find a real treat in his interview that follows.

# AN INTERLUDE WITH OUR NEW CONDUCTOR, PROF. JAMES SONG

by Annette Yangwon Jackson

For our readers whose appetites were whetted by “Passing of the Baton,” the following interview will satisfy their desire to get to know Prof. James Song better. Though he left



Korea at a tender age, his command of both Korean and English impressed me greatly. Please read on and I am certain you will be equally taken by our new conductor.

**A:** How did you first become interested in music and why? Why did you decide to become a conductor?

**S:** I have been interested in music

ever since I was a child. When I was about five years old I remember seeing an orchestra with a handsome looking conductor in impressive looking attire (the traditional tails worn by musicians) on TV, and saying to myself, “I want to be just like him when I grow up.” I had forgotten that until I went to college and then realized that being a conductor was a dream that I’d had since youth, that it was my destiny.

**A:** We are all grateful for your willingness to help our Korean-American youth. How did you learn about KAMSA and what sparked your interest? Do you have any specific or general goals for the KAMSA Orchestra?

**S:** I received a phone call from Mrs. Annette Jackson. You asked if I could recommend any Korean conductor for a youth orchestra in the Bay Area. You mentioned that you had heard of me through friends in the Los Angeles area. I asked you to send me some information regarding the organization and any specifics that could help me find a suitable person for the organization. I received the materials within a few days and spent some time reviewing everything as thoroughly as possible. When you called me back a few days later, I responded that it was a noble thing KAMSA was doing for Korean-American youth in the greater Bay Area and that if I could be of any assistance I would be more than willing to help. That conversation sparked the mutual interests which eventually led to the union I hope will be a long-lasting one. I hope to be a positive role model for our young musicians while working to steadily improve the quality of music-making. Currently, the KAMSA Orchestra performs once a year. It is my goal that the orchestra continues its growth in numbers as well as quality, so that it would become the envy of other communities. Eventually, I’d like to add more performances during the year. I realize that the students are

very busy in their schools, churches, communities, etc. But, once the orchestra is accepted as one of the top priorities in our musicians’ lives, the commitment to the group and the pride of belonging to such an organization will escalate rapidly. This will lead to more opportunities for showcasing these fine young artists. Once we have attained a certain level of competency, I’d like to take the group to an international level on tours and perform for audiences outside of the United States. This might sound like a lofty goal, but I will give my utmost to motivate our musicians to perform at their highest level.

**A:** I know you are too humble to say it but several accomplished musicians rank you among the best conductors under whom they have played. How would you describe your conducting style? Do you adjust anything when working with young musicians?

**S:** It’s difficult to describe my conducting style with words. My orchestra members constantly tell me that I am very easy to follow and that making music with me is a pleasure. In working with an orchestra, it’s not so important what one’s conducting style is or how he is compared to other conductors. More important is the right chemistry between conductor and musicians. This is the essential ingredient for a successful marriage. Moreover, mutual respect is an absolute necessity for building a great orchestra. This trusting relationship between musicians and the conductor is even more important for younger groups. I will do my best to earn the respect of the young musicians. They will learn that if they do their job, I will respect them as well.

**A:** Would you like to say anything about the audition process?

**S:** I understand the audition takes place sometime in May. It runs a full day with each musician performing approximately five minutes. Based upon my experience in dealing with various levels of musicians, one can learn a tremendous amount about a musician during the audition. Of course, there are several factors to consider when listening to an audition, such as the performer’s physical condition, emotional state, nervousness, etc. However, the player’s ability comes out clearly, even after playing one note. So, as a musician, it is very important to pay close attention to the tone production, musicality, dynamics and other expressive markings, as well as striving towards perfection in the technical passages when practicing. Let us remember that music is an art form that focuses on the aesthetics of sound. Thus, the ability to produce the most beautiful sound should be one of the top priorities. Can you imagine listening to a singer who has terrific technical mastery of notes but who produces tones that resemble a quacking duck? When these beautiful tone producing agents get together in an ensemble setting, the result is a beautiful sounding unit that can transform the black and white notations on sheet music into a

truly incredible experience that will surely please performers and listeners alike. Of course, one would question whether this is possible with a group of young musicians. And, the answer is that proper tone production is definitely within the abilities of musicians of all levels and ages.

**A:** How do you handle discipline?

**S:** This is a difficult subject. One would hope that once the musicians are accepted into an honor ensemble, such as the KAMSA Youth Orchestra, that they are disciplined enough to strive towards making a meaningful contribution to the group. However, when students do not fulfill their duties, then consequences must follow. Each student needs to remember that everyone is in that group for one reason, and that is to produce a harmonious sound that reflects the organization and its musicians. When a musician arrives even one minute late for the rehearsal, this sends a message to others that the orchestra is not a top priority. Likewise, when a musician does not practice, and it is apparent to everyone, again, this sends the message to the other musicians that he/she does not care about the orchestra. By that point, keeping such a musician in the orchestra without any disciplinary action would do more harm. So, the right way to handle the situation is to discipline the student and make sure that he/she resumes proper behavior and once again becomes a meaningful contributor to the ensemble. After shaping up and deciding to become an important part of the group the problem is solved. If not, then the next step follows. Again, I realize that these students have other school activities, church work, and that they might belong to other orchestras, etc. But, the moment that we allow these students to feel that membership in this orchestra is secondary to other activities, we lose the opportunity to make it grow. The commitment to excellence will not be there.

**A:** I agree with you. Human beings, especially children,

rise to our expectations and demands. I sincerely hope that all our orchestra members will strive to earn your respect.

**A:** Would you like to say a few words to prospective orchestra members and their parents?

**S:** Yes. I am very much looking forward to meeting all the musicians and their parents. I'd like to encourage prospective orchestra musicians to be diligent in their practice and in their preparations for the audition. After an initial meeting in May, when each student will come in for five minutes to audition, full rehearsals starting in August will be when the students and I get to know each other and start developing a relationship of trust. I have utter confidence that the students and I will be able to work together to create high quality orchestral music. I hope to have some meaningful interactions with the parents as well. I believe that the success of the youth orchestra really depends upon the commitment level of the parents. Since the students can't come to the rehearsal by themselves, unless legal to drive on their own, the commitment from parents to be on time and to be present at all rehearsals becomes a crucial ingredient in the success of such an organization. I encourage the parents to stay for the rehearsal whenever possible to see the improvements that our student musicians make each night.

**A:** I consider you an answer to prayer. Thank you for your time and willingness to help our youth.

After spending the better part of a day with Prof. Song, I can say that he is a genuinely humble and gentle, God-fearing man who exhibits both intensity and inner strength. He will certainly set an example worthy of respect and emulation by our budding musicians. We can all join in giving the support he deserves. WELCOME TO KAMSA, MAESTRO SONG!

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