

KAMSA CHRONICLE

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A. YANGWON JACKSON, EDITOR

President's Message

Kee H. Kim, M.D.

On the occasion of KAMSA's 9th season, I am proud to report that our organization remains committed to promoting the careers of young Korean-American musicians.



Recently the successful concert held September 12 under the direction of Maestro Lawrence Kohl proved once again that each year the orchestra attains higher quality. The music was truly beautiful. The KAMSA Youth Orchestra, like a flowing river, sees older members move on and welcomes new members as they join. Already the 10th Anniversary Gala is in the

November Herbst Theater Concert

KAMSA Presents World-Renowned Kayagum Master Byung-ki Hwang And Distinguished Bay Area Composer Hyo-shin Na

The virtuosic playing of world-renowned kayagum (a 12-stringed Korean traditional instrument) master and recording artist Byung-ki Hwang will be highlighted in concert, Sunday, November 15, 1998, at 7 p.m., at Herbst Theater, 401 Van Ness Avenue in San Francisco. The evening will also feature works by Bay Area composer Hyo-shin Na, winner of the prestigious Korean National

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planning phase.

This year, for our annual Herbst Theater concert, the world-renowned kayagum master, Byung-ki Hwang, and distinguished Bay Area composer, Hyo-shin Na, will join us on November 15.

As Korea Times reporter Byung-il Kim stated in an article, "KAMSA has immense influence on the cultural direction of the Korean community." The continued and much appreciated support of the Korean community will always be an essential ingredient for our continued success. We on the KAMSA board humbly request your help in furthering our shared goals and mission.

Interview With Maestro Kohl

by Annette Yangwon Jackson

Six days after his grand debut as conductor for the KAMSA Youth Orchestra, Maestro Kohl and I met to talk about his thoughts. He is a gentle, easy-going and intelligent person with a simple, graceful smile who exudes warmth and love for what his is doing, especially helping young musicians. Being grateful for how he was willing to help our young Korean musicians, I began...

AJ: First of all, congratulations on a wonderful job last Saturday!

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Ninth KAMSA Youth Orchestra

Performance On September 12, 1998

Fifty-two members of the KAMSA Youth Orchestra, under the direction of Maestro Kohl, mesmerized the audience of 800. The only Korean youth orchestra outside of Korea, playing to a full house, had grown in size and caliber.

Members range in age from 10 to 19. The high quality

performances by orchestral musicians and the four soloists were a source of pride to the whole Korean community. Through music, KAMSA members learn important tools for life. Also they share pure joy with others. These youth will be important contributors to both American and Korean societies. We take our hats off to the parents. Congratulations to all orchestra members and to Maestro Kohl!



KAMSA Presents

Composers Prize. Guest artists include the Ives String Quartet; Chung-soo Kim, changgu; June Han, harp; Thomas Schultz, piano; and Kenneth Piascik, percussion.



Byung-ki Hwang is one of the foremost interpreters of the kayagum. He is the first composer to have written contemporary music for the instrument, which dates back some 1400 years. His writing for the kayagum stretches the language of that instrument beyond anything that has previously been achieved. Professor Hwang began his studies of the kayagum at the National Classical Music Institute in Seoul in 1951. He took first prize at the National Competition of Korean Music in 1954 and 1956, received the

National Music Prize, Korean Cinema Music Prize and the prestigious Chungang Cultural Grand Prize. Hwang has toured extensively, giving performances in the U.S., Europe, Japan and Southeast Asia. Increasingly active as a composer and sponsor of new music in Korea, he has published five volumes of his own compositions, and a number of articles on composers such as John Cage and Nam June Paik. Recordings of his compositions have been issued in the U.S. and Korea. Hwang is currently professor of Korean music at the College of Music, Ewha Women's University in Seoul. He also serves on the Cultural Property Preservation Committee of the Korean Government and the Korean Section of the International Society for Contemporary Music.

Hyo-shin Na is the youngest recipient of the coveted Korean National Composers Prize. She has had her music performed extensively in Asia (including performances by Yuji and Aki Takahashi in Japan) and throughout Europe and the U.S. Her work has been broadcast on National Public Radio, German Radio and Belgian Radio. Hyo-shin Na recently received a commission from the Fromm Foundation at Harvard to write a work for the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players, a commission from the National Cultural Center to write for the Seoul Contemporary Music Festival, and in 1998 received an award from ASCAP. Locally, her works have been performed by such groups as The Womens Philharmonic, Stanford String Quartet and San Francisco Contemporary Music Players. Hyo-shin Na studied at Ewha Women's University in Seoul, Manhattan School of Music and the University of Colorado, where she received her doctorate in composition and theory.



PROGRAM

Forest (1963) The Silk Road (1977) <i>Byung-ki Hwang, kayagum</i> <i>Chung-soo Kim, Changgu</i>	Byung-ki Hwang
Poem of April (1984) <i>June Han, harp</i>	Hyo-shin Na
Variations (1990) <i>Thomas Schultz, piano</i>	Hyo-shin Na
Verse world premiere <i>June Han, harp</i>	Hyo-shin Na
Transcription (1997) <i>Ives String Quartet and</i> <i>Kenneth Piascik, percussion</i>	Hyo-shin Na
Chimhyang-moo (1974) <i>Byung-ki Hwang, kayagum</i> <i>Chung-soo Kim, Changgu</i>	Byung-ki Hwang

TICKETS:

\$20 general admission; \$10 for seniors and students. Tickets are available by calling City Box Office at (415) 392-4400. Contact Hyo W Choi at (408) 268-7745 or Key T. Kim at (415)861-7371 for more information.

Interview With Maestro

And thank you so much for directing the concert for us.
 LK: It was a great pleasure and I was honored to have been chosen.
 AJ: The Korea Times gave rave reviews. I know the reporter was impressed.
 LK: Yes, they played very well.
 AJ: The Orchestra really has grown in size and quality. Do you have a lot of experience working with children or youth? You seemed to have a very nice way of controlling them. (laughter)
 LK: Well, yes. I've done it quite a bit for many years with different

youth organizations. I was part of a federally funded CETA orchestra in the early eighties and we went into schools to help the music teachers. I have also done various other conducting and teaching activities that had to do with youth.
 AJ: It shows that you enjoy working with kids.
 LK: Yes, especially talented ones like KAMSA Orchestra's. They made it easy.
 AJ: So how did you feel about Saturday's performance?
 LK: It was a very, very special experience. I think it was the largest orchestra you've had so far and the energy in this situation really helped potentiate the end result. It was a lot to do in one lengthy afternoon but they really concentrated on their

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The Korean-American Music Supporters' Association, Inc. (KAMSA) is a not-for-profit organization registered in California (Registration No. 1647589) and with the IRS (Case No. 951022008EO). Participants like you in the San Francisco-San Jose Area support KAMSA. To continue KAMSA's annual activities, including the September Youth Orchestra Concert and the November Herbst Theatre Concert, your donations are essential. The KAMSA mission, "To promote the careers of young Korean-American musicians," can be achieved only when we all are working together.

Please send us your support.

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Interview With Maestro

performance and were very supportive of the soloists. My hat's off to them for their wonderful presentation. What I really enjoyed was the feel of the audience support. You can tell when you are leading a group what is going on in the audience. They were with it every moment of the way.

AJ: The President of KAMSA, Dr. Kim, has been with the organization from its inception. When he gave the speech during the concert, I could sense that he was very pleased and proud of the Korean youth.

LK: That's wonderful. He's most gracious and so dedicated to KAMSA.

AJ: What did you enjoy most about conducting the KAMSA Orchestra?

LK: Well, they are so talented. Because so many of them are so strong, I could use the strong ones to help out those that needed it and this enabled me to really concentrate on not just getting the notes right but really making music, bringing out the musical logic of each and every piece. I felt more like a conductor than a trainer.

AJ: Did it seem that they came adequately prepared for the rehearsals?

LK: Well, I know the situation in which the music was handed out, at the first rehearsal, and it was the only way it could be done. I picked the music very carefully based on what I heard in the audition and felt fairly confident that the learning curve would be there and that they would be able to absorb the music. I knew that the first couple of rehearsals would be a matter of getting familiar with the music, with each other and with me. Then you have to trust that there will be some practice time at home.

AJ: Did you have any challenges?

LK: In an organization like KAMSA, with the desire to include as many as we think can tackle the music, you have quite a range of abilities and ages. The challenge is really to get everybody as much as possible on the same playing field, the same level and same understanding. Hopefully older ones will help the younger ones and strong ones will help those



who are not quite so developed yet. That's really the biggest challenge in this situation. The kids are so well behaved. That didn't seem to me much of an issue. It worked well both ways.

AJ: Somehow they really seemed to respect you.

LK: You know, it goes both ways. I respect their talent and their abilities. Youth especially are very sensitive and there's no barrier. What they see influences what they feel and that's how they respond. If they see care and respect coming their way, then they are likely to return the same.

AJ: I also sensed that you were still very firm, and yet gentle. I am a teacher of young musicians and I think that's the best kind of combination.

LK: Yes, I agree.

AJ: Were there any cultural differences?

LK: I never saw so much food at rehearsals! Koreans love to eat, and I do too. Members of the orchestra felt like they were really being taken care of and this was great. I thought that it was something special. And the attitude of the members of the orchestra was just wonderful. There was a great deal of teamwork. It seemed to be a special trait of the orchestra and I applaud that.

AJ: I think the kids who participate in this orchestra are very special kids who come from very special families with good values.

LK: It was also interesting to see the soloists almost embarrassed to be soloists. Of course they all played very well but they were humble.

AJ: What are areas of needed improvement?

LK: Next time you have a concert like this, it would be nice to have one rehearsal in addition to the dress rehearsal at the concert hall. I think it would have helped to balance the projection in wind and brass and the tightness of ensemble. There are some very talented wind players in isolation. The others are quite young and have a lot of potential. I was glad that they had an opportunity to play and I just hope that they all have good teachers. I think the core of strong string players is there but they need more development in the wind and brass

About KAMSA Experience....

“As a member of KAMSA Youth Orchestra I gain many beneficial experiences. First of all, creating quality music being our goal, I become exposed to various types of music ranging from Baroque to Korean folk songs. I also believe the orchestra allows Korean youth to establish a kind of unity as Korean and as musicians. Besides that, playing KAMSA Youth Orchestra is very engaging. It promotes participation and fellowship among the Korean youth. To me being a member of KAMSA Youth Orchestra is a great asset in life.” — *Christie Jeon, student*

“KAMSA Youth Orchestra allows young musicians to get to know more people, obtain more musical and cultural knowledge, learn to cooperate with others, and create valuable memories.” — *Nahnsook Park, parent*

“KAMSA helped me enjoy playing the violin in the orchestra. I am looking forward to the KAMSA rehearsals in the upcoming years.” — *Jason Park, student*

“I joined KAMSA because it is a great chance to play great music. It also gives me the opportunity to bond with other Korean teenagers in the Bay Area and make lots of new friends. Every year I can see the drastic improvement in the orchestra from the year before and it makes me happy that I am able to contribute to the Korean community.” — *Jinsue Choi, student*

“As a Korean-American Community Services Agency staff, I am delighted to support KAMSA for the opportunity it gives young musicians to get together always concluding with a wonderful performance. My daughters have enjoyed playing in the orchestra and I hope KAMSA continues its success.” — *Hwaja Choi, parent*

Interview With Maestro

areas.

AJ: What would you like to tell the young musicians of KAMSA?

LK: That it was a joy to make music with them. I had a wonderful time. I got as much or more out of it than they did. They are very special and so talented I have no doubt that they can achieve whatever they choose to do in music or in life. As far as music, one of the things we talked about is to make sure that the last note of a phrase is as beautiful as the first note.

AJ: Any message for the parents?

LK: They were so supportive, being there at rehearsals, giving food, etc. They were just wonderful.

AJ: And for the Board members?

LK: The Board was so incredibly supportive and they really have it well-organized. Mela Hwang was just fantastic. She made everything so comfortable for me. Everybody made me feel welcome. I've already talked to a couple of Board members and they know that they should add more Board members. It would be wonderful to see them consider trying to attract Board members from the Korean-American community throughout the Bay Area. It would help attract more students and more performance opportunities in the larger geographi-

cal area.

AJ: And lastly, please share with us your philosophy on seating.

LK: The parents need to understand that there are many factors that go into determining seating. First and foremost would be the audition itself. I encourage the parents to realize that the audition should be taken as seriously as any solo performance. Other factors are considered: where they are seated in other groups in which they play. You would tend to want to seat them in the same area in this group. Also the seniority, how long they've played with KAMSA and also their age. And once seating is determined, only rarely would I consider making a change. And since it's a very short-term involvement, unlike CYS, for example, where there are ways to reevaluate, in this situation what we start with is how we should finish.

AJ: Yes, and you finished it with a bang. Congratulations again and I wish you continued success.

LK: Thank you.