

Tradition, Nationalism, Locality: A Study on Identity Discourses in Korean Contemporary Music*

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Abstract

In the history of Korean contemporary music, “identity” was an important issue inevitably faced by most composers: Korean composers were meant to find their own musical styles, while appropriating new Western music trends and contemplating their identity as Korean. Through the harsh post-war period, experiencing modernization and modernism during the 1960s–1970s, the democratic movements in the 1980s, and fast incorporation into the global neo-liberal system from the late 1990s, Korean composers revealed their musical identities in diverse ways, according to their socio-cultural conditions and individual concerns. This paper attempts to review how Korean composers’ “identity” discourses have changed in Korean contemporary music, from the post-war generation, like La Unyung, to young composers in their thirties, through a focus on three issues: tradition, nationalism, and locality. As a result, I argue that the identities of Korean composers are thoroughly individualized, hybridized, and multi-faceted in the globalized new music scene, both transgressing boundaries and connecting the locals.

한국 현대음악의 역사에서 정체성 문제는 피해갈 수 없는 본질적인 물음이었다. 서양음악 도입 이후 등장한 ‘작곡가’라는 존재가 정착해가는 과정에서 자신만의 음악적 고유함을 만들어내는 일은 모든 작곡가의 화두였기 때문이다. 하지만 그것이 드러나는 방식은 시대에 따라, 개인에 따라, 또 그 문제가 다루지는 맥락과 층위에 따라 복잡다단했다. 일제강점기와 해방, 분단과 한국전쟁을 지난 후 남한에 본격적인 작곡계가 형성되기 시작한 이래 현재까지 한국 작곡가들은 의식적·무의식적으로 자신이 처한 조건에서 이 문제를 고민해왔다. 작곡이란 자기 자신과 오류이 대면하는 데서 시작되는 행위인 바, 작곡가들의 정체성 담론을 살피는 일은 한국 현대음악의 주요 이슈가 어떻게 전개되는지 파악하는 데 필요한 과정이다. 이 논문은 한국 현대음악의 역사에서 정체성 담론이 어떻게 변화해왔는지 그 흐름을 되짚어보려는 시도다. 나운영 세대부터 최근 30대 작곡가들까지 정체성에 대한 생각들을 검토하며 그 역사적 맥락과 내용을 정리했다. 이를 통해 한국 작곡가들의 정체성 인식이 시대적 흐름에 따라 어떻게 달라졌는지, 이들의 문제의식이 서로 어떤 연관 관계를 맺고 있는지 드러낼 수 있을 것이다. 그에 앞서 논의를 위한 이론적 전제로서 정체성 담론을 둘러싼 몇 가지 쟁점을 살펴보고, 전통인식·민족주의·로컬리티라는 세 가지 이슈를 중심으로 한국 현대음악 속 정체성 담론을 재구성해 보았다.

Key Words

Korean contemporary music, identity discourses, tradition, nationalism, locality

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Introduction

In the history of contemporary Korean music, identity is a fundamental question that most composers inevitably cannot avoid. Identity became a critical issue for all Korean composers who aimed to forge a unique musical style, ever since the concept “composer” emerged in Korea along with the introduction of Western music. However, composer identity has historically been a complex and varied issue, depending on the historical period, the individual, and the contexts and hierarchies at play. When the full-fledged composition community formed in South Korea throughout periods of historical upheaval, including the Japanese colonial era, liberation, division, and the Korean War, Korean composers began to contemplate, consciously and unconsciously, the issue of identity according to their unique contexts and conditions. Considering that composition begins by directly facing oneself, examining the identity discourse of South Korean composers becomes a necessary process in understanding the development of contemporary Korean music.

Since the 1950s, musical identity discourse was considered an issue of cultural and social identity, beyond the realm of individual South Korean composers. Reflecting on colonial experience and the domination of Western culture, Korean composers constantly discussed the definition of “Korean” music; however, over time, the words and writings of composers were often forgotten and ignored in public discourse. Thus, the following generation repeatedly raised similar questions from a slightly different perspective, rather than using the lessons of trial and error from predecessors. La Unyung and Lee Sanggeun’s critical consciousness in the 1950s and 1960s, Kang Sukhi and Paik Byungdong’s subjects in the 1960s and 1970s, Lee Geonyong and the Third-Generation Declaration in the 1980s, and Korean composers’ manifold interests since the 1990s, all appeared to be engaged in the process of discovering their musical identity. However, few studies have focused on interpreting these composers’ thoughts from a historical lens, and what their presence implied in the context of modern and contemporary Korean history.

This paper attempts to explore how Korean composers’ identity discourses have changed in contemporary Korean music history. From La Unyung and his contemporaries to current composers in their thirties in the 21st century, this paper examines Korean composers’ identities and their historical contexts. In doing so, this paper illustrates how the perceptions of identity of Korean composers has changed according to the trends of the time, and how their critical consciousness relates to each other. Prior to this discussion, and after navigating issues surrounding identity discourse as a theoretical framework, this paper aims to reconstruct the identity discourse in Korean contemporary music through three main keywords: tradition, nationalism, and locality.

Critical Issues in Identity Discourse

A. Flexible and Multiple Identities

Identity discourse begins with the ontological question: *who am I?* Political scientist Kim Youngmin states in his column, “Identity does not reflect our current state, but our desire for some attractive object different from ourselves.”¹ This wisdom implies that the understanding of identity comes only when a person’s desires come into clarity. Identity also develops in relation to others.² Whether as an individual or as a part of a group, people identify themselves based on difference. For instance, western societies developed awareness of their identities when encountering other cultures through colonialism, whereas colonies suffered identity crises when the West began to threaten their existence. As such, crises usually stimulate questions related to identity. The persistent questions about identity in modern Korean society likely relate to the many existential crises in South Korean history.

“Identity” means the characteristics that distinguish an individual or group from others. Identity is often assumed to be something complete and consistent, but as Stuart Hall points out, the modern subject is fragmented and contradictory; therefore, a stable identity is merely an illusion.³ Identity is not a fixed and consistent state, but an ongoing process. Identity then is not an immutable attribute but continuously transformed and reconstructed through interaction with others. In this respect, identity is flexible, multiple and sometimes self-contradictory. These characteristics of identity are even more accentuated in the era of globalization, where extensive migration and compression of time and space take place. Nowadays, local artists tend to express and exhibit the pluralistic and flexible nature of identity.

The apparent identity issues of contemporary Korean music can also take on different variations depending on the context. The self-consciousness of a composer in South Korea forms through the specific social conditions of each era, and the meaning and value of their musical artifacts are reevaluated and reconstructed from the present perspective of an audience. Depending on which aspect the audience pays attention to, and relates to, a different mode of identity may be transmitted. When maintaining a flexible and open attitude about identity, it becomes possible for the audience to understand the object in a more multidimensional way.

B. Cultural Identity Demanded for Non-Western Composers

The impossibility of a singular and complete identity also applies to the field of national cultural identity, which often advocates cultural homogeneity and political integration. Although the perception that “modern people are all cultural hybrids” has spread widely, Western society’s othering

of composers from non-Western countries remains a prominent pattern. For instance, Chin Unshuk, who began to gain recognition in the world music scene in the 1990s and established herself as a leading composer of the 21st century, has long had “Asian composer” impressed upon her identity.

In a 2016 interview, Chin was asked “would it be fair to say that you effectively abandoned your own culture for a while, for fear of not being taken seriously as an artist?” She then redirects the question asking, “which one is ‘my own’ culture? I have lived in Germany for 28 years and have worked professionally in many different countries, and that inevitably turns into a kind of mixed identity.” Her story expresses how a singular cultural identity cannot be assumed in this age, and we should accept the plurality of identity in order not to fall into the “identity trap,” a concept proposed by Amartya Sen.⁴ Gregor Dotzauer, the German cultural critic who asked the question to Chin, also would know that a singular cultural identity no longer exists. Nevertheless, asking such a question to an Asian composer might imply how the European view on non-Western culture as *other* still strongly exists within Western culture.

Even if Western music is globalized, it is natural for those who have grown up in a non-Western place with a different history and tradition to feel and think differently from European composers. Therefore, such a “difference” would be evident in their music. However, it is problematic that the West automatically categorizes Asian composers as other, under the idea of “encountering” or “cultural convergence” between the East and West, rather than articulating differences in detail or paying attention to their uniqueness. Why should the cultural identity of the region always be linked to the personal achievements of non-Western composers, while people do not look for regional characteristics in the music of composers from Germany, France, and Italy?⁵ Asian composers are still viewed as foreigners rather than peers by European composers.

They overlook how daily life in Seoul, Tokyo, Hong Kong, and Taipei in the 21st century is not much different from that in New York, Paris, London, and Berlin. Even if a reciprocal cultural perspective has become important beyond the era of Orientalism and Occidentalism, it is not easy to understand other cultures in depth. This pattern of othering also appeared when discussing cultural phenomena from the periphery of Europe. When cultural identity operates as an exclusive classification and hierarchical framework, marginal subjects, such as women, people of color, ethnic minorities, migrant artists, and diasporas, encounter resistance to the full expression of their voices. The existential condition and cultural identity of *the other* used to play a more significant role for these marginalized subjects. However, the historical context in which Yun Isang debuted in European contemporary music scene in the 1960s differs greatly from the context of the 2010s, when numerous Asian composers were active around the world. Nevertheless, the naming and static viewpoint

of “Asian composers” remains unchanged.

The unique emergence of Asian composers creates in a “third” space where heterogeneous cultures collide and interact together. This forms in a complex stratum that cannot be easily defined as “Asian” or “Korean,” or cannot be reduced to the simple blending of the East and West. The true value and individuality of these composers comes into clarity only when we pay attention to their unique existence and practical specificity. As European composers do not highlight their cultural identity as primary in their music, Asian composers have to challenge and disturb Western representations of Asians, and Asian composers, to have their individuality appropriately recognized.

C. Between Cultural Identity and the Individuality of a Composer: The Socio-cultural Condition of Korean Contemporary History

Not only Europeans often perceived the Asian *as Other*, and automatically linked the identity of composers to the cultural identity of their region of origin. Even in the history of modern and contemporary Korean music, individual identity often expanded to the identity of a community. It is imperative for the peoples of colonized countries to seek the cultural identity of their country. However, rather than deeply immersing within their own culture and tradition, to create their unique individuality, artists tended to other their own tradition under the empty rhetoric of “Koreanness” or “national culture.” This was also the inevitable historical condition faced by Korean composers. When “composer” as a modern profession first appeared in early 20th century Korea, Korean people considered composers, such as Baik Wooyong (1883-1930) and Hong Nanpa (1898-1941), not artists with free spirits in the vein of the Romantic era, but rather people who led military bands or ensembles and wrote practical music. *Gagok* (Korean art song), the main genre of Korean composers during the Japanese colonial era, gradually established itself as the representative music culture of colonial Joseon through publication and performance of gagok collections.⁶ After the period of performer-composers, composers such as Kim Sunnam (1917-1983) and Lee Geonwoo (1919-1998) wrote unique gagoks.⁷ However, the social circumstances for composers was still inadequate, due to ideological confrontation between the left and right, the division between the North and South, and the aftermath of the Korean War.

Korean gagok,⁸ widely sung in the 1950s and 1960s, often failed to break away from its simple compositional style. Some composers made attempts to explore the possibility of Korean artistic gagoks, such as selecting good lyrics, studying the subtle nuances of the Korean language, and testing out various composition methods.⁹ However, given that few vocalists were interested in Korean art song at that time, composers failed to create an independent movement of Korean gagok in contrast to the popularity of Western songs in South Korea. This trend

was not only an issue for the gagok tradition but the culture in which new pieces were commissioned, played, and enjoyed, which was not yet fully established in South Korea at that time. Composers held their own composition recitals through individual sponsors or associations. Even though the Seoul Philharmonic Orchestra and KBS Symphony Orchestra played new compositions as part of the Korean Composers Project in the 1960s, orchestral works were performed mostly for national events. Thus, it was not easy to re-perform those pieces or use them as repertoires.

As the 1955 debate between English scholar Oh Hwaseop and composer Yun Isang over the first recital of the Korean Composers Association indicates,¹⁰ South Korean composers were inexperienced at appropriating adequate composing techniques to represent their time. Composers in their thirties in the 1960s, such as La Unyung (1922-1993) and Lee Sanggeun (1922-2000), were thirsty for contemporary music resources. As a result, they organized the Korean Contemporary Music Association and “led the distribution and enlightenment of contemporary music.”¹¹ The first-generation composers that graduated from a South Korean composition department, including Kim Dalsung (1921-2010), Chung Hoegap (1923-2013), and Lee Seongjae (1924-2009), organized the Contemporary Music Society in Seoul (Changakheo) in 1958 and held a composition recital to chase the trends of contemporary music. However, Korean composers experienced difficulty in fully digesting new methods and styles from the West, which they encountered on a limited basis. As the modernization of South Korea in the 1960s was strongly driven by the state with the goal to rapidly catch up with the West as its model, contemporary music also developed in compulsion with the Westernization model.¹²

In the absence of a performance culture for new works, composers paid more attention to discourses of “national music” or “Koreanness” as opposed to pursuing their individual musical concerns. La Unyung spoke about this topic more than any other composer. In numerous articles such as “The Current Challenge of Establishing National Music” (1953), “7 Articles on Korean Music Reformation” (1957), “To Make Music More Korean” (1959), “The Locality and Globality of Korean Music” (1967), and “Localization and Modernization of Korean Music” (1976), La Unyung identified himself as a “Korean” composer and proposed specific composition methodologies for national music.¹³ For him, the composer’s individual characteristics were inseparable from national identity.

La Unyung’s composition style appropriated material from traditional *gugak* (Korean traditional music) and reinterpreted it in a contemporary fashion. However, it was difficult for Korean composers to express their individuality in a situation where they had limited direct exchange with the external world, and where they could not go beyond a limited, simple musical framework, as Koreans namely experienced western music through the conduit of Japanese exchange. In South Korea, where the effects of the Cold War penetrated into cultural spheres, composers seemed to either pursue “Koreanness” in their own ways or

purely focus on sound, distanced from politics. Only after the democratization of South Korea, when international exchange intensified, did the overall capabilities of individual composers significantly improve. From here onward, individual composers began to express their unique individuality.

The identities of composers who were active in the 1950s and 1960s are inevitably different from the young composers of the 21st century, living in the era of globalization. With liberation from Japanese colonialism came a lack of accumulated cultural assets for Korean composition. In this context, some composers linked their music solely to Korean cultural identity, whereas other composers maintained distance from the nationalist perspective and escaped to the world of pure music. A few decades after liberation, the individuality of a composer could be finally be discussed in concrete terms, when composers obtained the resources and ability to freely express their art. This implies that the various forms of individuality of a composer should be brought to light when discussing the cultural identity of Korean composers.

Tradition, Nationalism, and Locality

A. Changes in the Perception of Tradition

For many Korean composers, tradition was an important source of creation. It is natural for Korean composers to understand tradition as a spiritual and cultural foundation, and draw creative ideas and musical expressions from it, either through the process of discovering one's identity or by tasks based on realistic needs. Tension between contemporary Western music and Korean traditional culture was the reality, as well as a driving force of creation for Korean composers.

In the early days of the introduction of Western music, Koreans had to adapt themselves to modern Western civilization. In this circumstance, Korean composers who encountered Western music through Christian hymns considered traditional Korean music an outdated relic of the past. Korean composers also regarded *pansori* and Korean folk songs, which were closely attached to the lives of ordinary people during the Japanese colonial era, as unsuitable for the new era. They believed that a new generation of composers, such as the "Bach of Joseon" or "Beethoven of Joseon" should emerge as soon as possible to create a new form of Joseon music.¹⁴ The perception that tradition can be the subject of a new creation was born only after the sounds of Western music had quieted in Korea. Even composers who paid attention to the value of the Korean tradition, however, believed that Korean traditional music should be reformed based on the standards of Western music. For instance, La Unyung claimed Korean traditional music should overcome its primitive form and be revived as "new Korean classical music" or "new Korean music," through comprehensive reforms in terms of tuning, notation, musical

instrument craftsmanship, instrumental technique, harmony, composition, and education methodology.¹⁵ Kim Dongjin, who was deeply fascinated by pansori, also thought that pansori vocalization was unscientific and outdated, even though he accurately captured the treatment of *sigimsae* (refined vocal ornament in pansori songs) and subtle changes in tune. He understood pansori through “melody, harmony, and rhythm that could be played with Western vocalization and instruments rather than through [local] sound and hidden charm.”¹⁶

La Unyung, who considered traditional materials as essential for Korean music creation, proposed several standardized methods. La’s methods included composing instrumental music on the theme of folk songs, utilizing time signatures of 6/8·9/8·12/8 and quartal harmony, and using microtones to achieve the taste of Korean traditional music.¹⁷ These guidelines were often used by composers who wanted to find Korean expressions in traditional music when it was critical to eliminate “the color of *changa*, church, and Japanese style.”¹⁸ In particular, instrumental music on the theme of folk songs included Kim Dongjin’s “Yongsan-ga” (1943) and Kim Sungtae’s “Symphonic Capriccio” (1948) on the theme of “Monggeumpo Taryeong.” In 1954, the *Korean Folk Song Collection* was published, in which eight composers wrote and arranged and Jang Sahoan added commentary.¹⁹

In the 1960s, interest in tradition became more pronounced. Notably, Chung Hoegap’s “Theme and Variations for Gayageum and Orchestra” (1961) fused Western and Korean traditional music. This work was the result of Chung’s effort to combine *gayageum*, a traditional Korean instrument, with a Western orchestra in a completely different system and playing method, in accompaniment with the *gayageum* player, Hwang Byungki.²⁰ Performers from the Department of Korean Music at Seoul National University, newly established in 1959, also awakened interest in traditional musical instruments through newly commissioned works.²¹ The composers’ recognition of tradition often originated from their childhood experiences. Kim Dongjin’s lifelong commitment to new *changak* (modernized pansori) began when he listened to Kim Sohee’s performance in Pyongyang in the 1930s. Similarly, Chung Hoegap, a native of Gimje-gun, Jeollabuk-do, may not have participated in the above collaborative attempt if he had not encountered *nongak* (traditional farmer’s music) in his hometown.²²

Korean traditional music was often considered an outdated relic of the old era because of its “deficiency” in harmony. Yet the flow of Western contemporary music allowed people to reexamine Korean traditional music in terms of delicate nuance and rich tone. Composers discovered new acoustic possibilities in the marginalized traditional sounds of everyday life, which had been unnoticed in a method of Shingugak (new Korean traditional music). Kang Sukhi’s “Lye Buhl” (Buddhist Service) for a male solo, male chorus, and 30 percussionists (1968) and Lee Youngjo’s “Kyung” (Buddhist Chant) for percussion and a male

chorus (1975) were both inspired by the majestic atmosphere of dozens of monks reading scriptures during an early morning Buddhist service. On the other hand, Hwang Byunki's "The Labyrinth" for gayageum and a voice (1975) and Kang Sukhi's "Buru" for a voice and five players (1976) produced a shamanistic atmosphere, reminiscent of the art of the Shilla Dynasty and "humans prior to civilization, sound prior to language." These works reproduced primitive emotions and forgotten traces of tradition through acoustic gestures during a period of rapid modernization across society.²³ Korean composers used tradition as a source of creation in various ways. La Inyong's orchestral work "Reverberation of Hangak" (1972), which transformed five folk songs into echo-like contemporary sound, Kang Sukhi's orchestral work "Dalha" (1978), which transformed the lengthy and linear sound flow of Sujecheon (a Korean court music composition) into contemporary sound, and Kim Chunggil's "Chuchomun" for 8 players (1979), which embodies the free improvisation of *sinawi*, and the piano suite "Gopung" (1981), which depicts the subtle mood of traditional objects, such as *hyanghap* (incense box), *namakshin* (wooden shoes), *okbinyo* (jade hairpin), and *munpungji* (paper weather strips), are all good examples.

The next generation of Korean composers felt that they had to adhere more actively to tradition than their predecessors. For composers who started their career in the late 1970s when Western contemporary music became the mainstream, such as Lee Youngjo (1943-), Kang Joonil (1944-2015), Yi Manbang (1945-), Lee Geonyong (1947-), Yi Zonggu (1947-), and Chin Kyuyung (1948-), tradition was not an abstract or stylized concept, but rather something they returned to in order to tell their stories.²⁴ Lee Youngjo captured tradition from the unique and real sounds of everyday life and transformed them into a modern aesthetic sensibility.²⁵ Kang Joonil, who began to draw attention with his *samulnori* (Korean traditional percussion quartet) concerto "Madang" (1983), approached tradition as a core philosophical foundation of Koreans, and from a more fundamental and spiritual perspective.²⁶ Yi Manbang, who believed that the resources of creation should be enriched from traditional roots, produced string quartet no. 2 "Amita" (1984), inspired by *sanjo*, *gut* (shaman ritual) music, and *bumpae* (Buddhist chant). Since the late 1990s, Yi searched for elemental and primitive sounds prior to folk songs.²⁷ Lee Geonyong found the new expressive possibility of tradition amid a fierce study on the daily practices of reality, as his "Arrowroot Vines of Mt. Mansoo" (Mansusan Drungchik) for gugak orchestra and chorus (1987). Since the 1990s, he has sought to discover tradition through a search for the archetypes of emotions inherent to everyday life.²⁸ These composers commonly connected tradition in various ways, according to their critical consciousness and while creating unique musical works.

Designating 1994 as the Year of Korean Traditional Music, after 50 years of liberation, was a remarkable event illustrating the changed perception of tradition in the 1990s. Although it was a government-led

event, the day demonstrated the increased interest in traditional music in South Korea. Koo Bonu (1958-) and Na Hyoshin (1959-), who started their composing careers in the 1990s, used gugak as a tool for self-expression, according their unique personal circumstances, rather than to establish their national identity as “Korean” composers. The enhanced commission opportunities for Korean traditional instruments and gugak performers, especially those working to collaborate with contemporary music, played a pivotal role in stimulating the interest of composers in tradition.²⁹ In particular, the Contemporary Music Ensemble Korea (CMEK), which was formed in 1998 by gayageum player Lee Jiyong, inspired a new musical imagination among composers by combining Korean traditional and Western musical instruments.³⁰ Although performers supported new works in the 1960s and 1970s, Korean traditional music performers in the 1990s more actively sought new music, especially when their overseas activities had grown in earnest amid the trend of globalization. Collaborators with Korean traditional music performers, who were interested in new composition methods and had many opportunities to perform, inspired Korean composers to revalue tradition from a completely different perspective. Collaboration with Korean traditional instruments and musicians provided composers with an opportunity to navigate a specific branch of tradition from their viewpoint, making it into their own, as opposed to simply exploring traditional elements or tradition as an abstract idea.

If tradition is something a composer encounters while questioning his identity, it is not an easily manageable material, but an object to be thoroughly studied in the artist’s composition process. Jeon Jiyong stresses that composers have an imperative “to traditionalize the modern,” not “to modernize the tradition,” through an in-depth analysis of tradition.³¹ Not only should gugak musicians bear this argument in mind, but Korean composers who are interested in tradition should do the same. “The artist’s affection and research for a selected material shows his artistic pride in good creation,” and in a high-quality work, “tradition is finally respected as a creative material, and its value will not be compromised.”³²

B. Various Implications for Korean National Music

“Korean music” or “national music” has been the main agenda of Korean composers. When Western music was first introduced in Korea, it was somewhat awkwardly combined with Korean lyrics, but gradually settled into a new genre called “Korean gagok” in an effort to adapt to the melody and rhythm inherent to the Korean language. The establishment of national music in the liberation period (1945-48) after the Japanese colonial era was an important task for Korean composers, along with the elimination of Japanese colonial remnants. However, even when Korean composers agreed on the principle and rationale of national music at large, they had different theories and methodologies, and thus “failed to draw a consensus on musical style.”³³ Aside from whether “national mu-

sic” can be created through a “consensus,” this phenomenon produced a series of empty ideological slogans, rather than being approached through the composers’ composition process.

In the 1950s and 1960s, the issue of national music was still discussed in public discourses, producing more political rhetoric instead of a true action plan. The demand of establishing a national music often appeared through national music competitions, secondary school music textbooks, and the mission statements of symphony orchestras and choirs. When the Korean Composers Association was established in 1954, “the promotion of national music culture” was included in their mission statement. Given that “nation” was an ideological device to construct a nation-state under the Cold War, “national music” was nothing but a political slogan for composers’ self-justification.³⁴ After the Korean War, musicians identified themselves as “national musicians” by composing “national songs” and contributing to the national regeneration movement promoted by the Rhee Syngman regime as a part of the nation building project.³⁵ This might be why Park Yonggu lamented that “the [genuine] nationalistic flow of new music composition” was cut off from the South Korean music scene in the 1960s.³⁶

La Unyung was the composer who had consistently demanded for “national music” during this period. Although the claim of “establishing true national music by consuming foreign music in a Joseon context and theoretically systematizing Korean traditional music” (1947)³⁷ was widely shared by Korean composers of the Japanese colonial era and liberation space,³⁸ La Unyung tried to theorize his work systemically. The ten-volume series of La Unyung’s music theory, led by *Harmony* (1978), is also the product of such a critical consciousness. In the tenth volume *Contemporary Harmony*, he wrote, “I am confident that Korean national music with global character will emerge,” once he invented and distributed the systematized Korean harmony.³⁹ Even though his approach had limitations in terms of material, his theory clearly influenced later composers as a useful guideline. La Unyung set up his composition motto as “indigenization first, and then modernization” and held the New Hymn Composition Recital in 1976. Since August 1979, he organized a monthly tribute service for new hymn composition and devoted himself to writing seven new hymns every month. Notably, about 1,000 hymns, created through an application of Korean harmony, were the concrete result of La’s search for national music.

Discourses on “Korean music” or “national music” hit their stride in the 1980s. Along with the democratization movements across South Korean society, composers looked for self-sustaining local music that was not subordinate to the West. The identity discourse triggered by musicologist Lee Kangsook’s arguments for musical mother tongue and Korean music gained momentum through the activities of The Third Generation Composer Group led by Lee Geonyong and the Institute of Korean Music Theater founded by opera director Moon Hogeun.⁴⁰ Lee

Kangsook was appointed as a music professor at Seoul National University in 1977 after returning from the U.S. She reflected on the current situation in which neither Western music nor Korean traditional music functioned as a musical mother tongue for South Koreans and suggested an ideological concept of Korean music that was absent in South Korea at that time. In addition, Lee Geonyong, who led the discourse on the identity of Korean music in numerous articles, argued that the mainstream Korean music theory in the 1980s and the Song Movement theory of the cultural movement camp were combined under the name of national music theory in the 1990s.⁴¹ Lee Geonyong served as the chairman of the National Music Research Association (hereinafter Mineumyeon), a group of young musicians founded in 1989 and was appointed as the second president of the Korean National Musicians Association (hereinafter Mineumhyeop) formed in the following year.⁴²

Meanwhile, the Institute of Korean Music Theater sought a Korean musical drama style that “sings the lives of our age in our language,” and hosted research opportunities and composition meetings, workshop performances, and music theater festivals on various topics encompassing theory and practice.⁴³ As a result, musical theater works, such as “Our People” (1987) and “Guro-dong Love Song” (1988), were written by Kang Joonil, Kim Cheolho, and Lee Geonyong, composers who recognized the realities of life at the time. National opera (minjok gageuk) such as “Geum River” (1994) and “Baekdu Mountain” (1995) were created after the establishment of the national opera troupe Geumgang in 1993. These works, based on the Donghak Peasant Revolution and the armed struggle against imperial Japan, were created by musicians of Song Movement, such as Lee Hyunkwan, Kim Sangchul, and An Chihwan.⁴⁴ Even though the experiments of the Institute of Korean Music Theater could have been a meaningful attempt to succeed Ahn Kiyong’s local opera in the Japanese colonial era, this is not even recorded in the 70 years of Korean opera history.⁴⁵ The poor evaluation of the achievement might be attributed to Moon Hogeun’s early death in 2001, but it was mainly because their “national music,” which was closely linked with the 1980s and 1990s social movements, failed to enter the established music community in South Korea.⁴⁶

Since its foundation in 1989, Mineumyeon published the journal *National Music*⁴⁷ and expanded their scope by holding a music camp. They expressed concern that Mineumyeon could not attract mainstream progressive musicians as an experienced professional music organization.⁴⁸ However, young members who joined at that time actively work as senior musicians now. Kang Eun (haegeum) and Heo Yoonjung (geomungo), who drew attention with the soloist ensemble Sangsang in the early 2000s, are working on ensembles such as Haegeum Plus or Black String, while composer Lee Taewon formed Musician Group Gomul with performers to experiment on alternatives to institutional music. In the 1990s, Mineumyeon’s activities became the foundation for a new trend in the

Korean traditional music scene in the 2000s, and opened a possibility for gugak to break away from the dichotomy between Western music and Korean traditional music.

The Third Generation Composer Group, who forged a critical consciousness of “overcoming the second generation,” sought a new career path in the 1990s. In a talk recollecting the past 10 years, Lee Geonyong encapsulated the common directions of third generation composers as a stylistic attempt to maintain Korean traditional music, an interest in reality as an antithesis to art for art’s sake, and a preference for ordinary music to overcome excessive esotericism.⁴⁹ However, it is not clear how they actually overcame the second generation. As the disparity between the third generation and the next generation has not yet become distinct, the artistic forms of their critical consciousness did not affect the composition community as a whole. Although they highlighted the identity issue of Korean composers as a public discourse, they failed to move beyond the easy solution of appropriating traditional music to surpass the critical consciousness of the second generation.⁵⁰

The discourse of national music in the 1980s and 1990s differed from that of the previous era in that it had a clear ideological orientation. Composers in the 1980s, reflecting on the problem of the South Korean music scene, express that it was too dependent on Western culture, and an attempt to maintain the historical context of the national music movement through research on modern Korean music history. As a result, they were deeply involved in social issues through solidarity with the national art movement. However, compared to their impact on society, they did not seem to drive major change in the music community. Moreover, in the 1990s, amid the negation of the Cold War system and the wave of globalization, “national music” rooting for a modern nation-state lost its power. Now, individual identity, formed under the specific conditions of a specific region and not a “nation” as an “imagined community,” has become more important.

C. The New Horizon of Locality

In the 1990s, South Korean society experienced major upheavals. It suffered the 1997 Asian financial crisis under the first civilian government, and the neoliberal paradigm began to take place amid the rapid trend of democratization, informatization, and globalization. Studying abroad became accessible, international exchanges were expanded, diversity emerged as an important social issue unlike the previous era that concentrated on biased ideology. Scholars began to critically examine Western-centered modernism. As a talk among composers in their 30s (led by Kim Choonmee), published in quarterly magazine *Nangman Eumak* (Romantic Music) in 1990, indicates, they focused on their own personal concerns in music instead of overcoming the previous generation.⁵¹ Rather than generating social issues or movements, they aimed to get a

position at a university to continue their composition activities under relatively stable conditions and concentrated on creating high-quality music in their style. These composers knew that the argument for seeking modern idioms suitable for the times or finding Korean identity would only become convincing when their music itself became persuasive.

Another important change was that more performers recognized the importance of new repertoires and works, as the Korean music industry had reached a higher level in terms of quantity and quality. The Korea Festival Ensemble, led by pianist Park Eunhee, was a representative organization that drove this trend,⁵² and renowned musicians, such as Kang Dongsuk and Paik Kunwoo, were also applauded for their concerto performances of Yun Isang and Kang Sukhi.⁵³ A new musical work became meaningful not as an artistic self-presentation of a composer, but as a repertoire of performers and musical organizations interacting with the audience through a performance. Performers are not passive mediators, but creative producers, and the number of such performers has gradually increased in the South Korean music community over the past 20 years. In particular, the active commissioning of new work by Korean traditional music performers gave composers new musical tasks. The spread of a music culture, where creation and performance naturally combine, became the primary foundation for the identities of Korean music to be revealed.

The accelerated trends of globalization have awakened an awareness of locality among Korean composers. The collaboration between Korean traditional music players, who want to debut on the world stage, and domestic and overseas composers, has led to a distinct consideration on how “local” resonates within a “global” audience. The Silk Road Project, launched by Yo-Yo Ma in 1998, was designed to reflect the trend of “glocalization” and allowed musicians to explore new musical possibilities through a mixture of Western and traditional regional musical instruments.⁵⁴ The increase in the number of combined works of Korean traditional music and Western musical instruments in the 2000s correlates this trend. Korean composers are now interested in Korean traditional music and instruments for practical reasons, not for the meta-discourse of “tradition” or “nation.” This is because not only are there many commissions for composition, but also performers actively engage in collaborations with composers.

In the global contemporary music scene, an easy way for Korean composers to reveal their identity is to include Korean traditional instruments in their works. There are quite a number of Korean traditional music performers working abroad as well as foreign composers writing pieces for Korean traditional instruments. Now, rather than partially appropriating Korean traditional musical elements, such as folk melodies, modal harmony, rhythmic patterns, and sigimsae expressions, composers explore the unique sound of traditional instruments as well as incorporate gugak performances as a source of musical imagination. They use gugak

not because they purposely try to write a musical work under a national identity, but because they are simply fascinated by Korean traditional music and musical instruments by chance. This trend was hard to imagine a few decades ago. This indicates that the overall perception and status of Korean traditional music has elevated over the years. However, even for a composer who is proficient in contemporary music methodology, it is not easy to learn Korean traditional music and musical instruments and mix them into his or her music. The recent writings excessively using terms such as “interculturality” or “hybridity” to describe works combining Korean and Western music or Western music using Korean traditional musical instruments without proper analysis seems as worthless as some composers’ naive approach to Korean traditional music.

György Ligeti (1923-2006) is a notable example of revealing a composer’s identity through locality. He originally identified himself as a cosmopolitan distanced from nationalism, but his music in the late 1990s clearly showed signs of regionalism. The method he used became clearly different from his previous works in early 1950 that adopted Hungarian and Romanian folk styles. It was the result of his crossing diverse regions and connecting to varied music, such as unique Hungarian poetics, or the tone of a horn in the Transylvania region that he encountered as a child.⁵⁵ For him, the music culture of a particular region is “an opportunity that triggers him to re-examine his critical consciousness to create something entirely new.”⁵⁶

In the globalized contemporary music world, composers are asked to represent their own identity. In this sense, the specific situation and condition of each composer becomes important. Specific experience, how one is born, raised, and how one learns, how one creates interactions, forms the musical foundation of a composer, and connects him with various fields to create his own world artistically. The numerous elements that constitute the identity encounter and blend with other currents, and constructs individuality in a multilayered way. The individuality of a composer in the era of globalization grows in a place where the local and the global interact and intervene through crossing and connecting.

Composers born in the 1980s, who began their career in the new millennium, start from their own daily lives, the specific time and space of “now, here,” and individual experience,⁵⁷ finding and researching Korean traditional music, and collaborating with traditional music performers, who are also in line with their own stories, not in a grandiose pursuit of Koreanness. Maybe some composers take advantage of Asian identity as *other* to easily attract attention on the international stage or use Korean traditional musical instruments to obtain funding, but tradition is difficult to blend into one’s identity without fully embodying it. Universal empathy becomes possible when one honestly explores his or her identity and creates uniqueness from individuality, rather than broadly avowing cultural identity. The phrase “the most personal is the most creative” cited by Korean director Bong Joonho, who recently won an Oscar, applies to

composers of our time as well. Composers should not be overly engrossed in abstract concepts such as “Koreanness” or “succession of tradition” but should discover the details of their own music that deals with the specific time and space of South Korea within the globalized music culture.

Choi Yujun, who has emphasized the need for a “spatial turn” in Korean music discourse, advocates for individual thoughts and projections about specific spaces, places, and regions separated from the collective identity of a nation-state that presupposes homogeneous time and space. He imagines “a specific and heterogeneous place(s) of life where various identities are formed,” and expects the musical imagination of regions, such as Seoul, Busan, Daegu, Jeonju, Gwangju, and Tongyeong, will provide a new perspective within the mainstream trend of contemporary Korean music.⁵⁸ He also borrows Argentine postcolonialist Walter D’Mignolo’s theoretical term “the position of speech.” Choi argues that differences derived from diverse spaces and places can be developed into “cosmopolitan regionalism” or “postcolonial cosmopolitanism” by crossing and negotiating boundaries in a globalized art field.⁵⁹

Similarly, Korean composers should acknowledge that the very place they are stepping on is the beginning of their “aesthetic speech” in the identity discourse. Even if one’s identity is blended with other factors in the globalized contemporary music field, it is revealed through a self-narrative in the end. It is time to pay attention to how various forms of individual identities that have not been reduced to the symbol “Korea” are represented in the musical details.

Conclusion

The identity of a composer is not singular. It constantly adjusts depending on the background of growth, the area of activity, or relationships. In my previous article dealing with the usefulness of the concept “assemblage” in composer studies, I pointed out that the individuality of a composer is not singular or fixed but is a “variable manifold” that can appear differently depending on which individualities assemble together.⁶⁰ The identity of a composer in the era of globalization is thoroughly individualized, hybridized, and multilayered, crossing and connecting with locality.

Discourses on the identity of Korean contemporary music can also be constantly rebuilt through the performance and dynamic interaction of individual subjects constituting a variable manifold. The individuality of a composer is not fully explained simply by ideas or elements. It is important to see how certain elements are used in an individual composers’ work. Hong Jeongsoo tried to define the identity of Korean music with “Saeyahwahyeon,” “Kungdobak,” “Bunjineum,” and “Sigimsae-style thinking.”⁶¹ It remains critical to create appropriate conceptual tools to capture the

musical characteristics of Korean composers. However, we should ask further how such elements operate in the music of individual composer and articulate their uniqueness. It is necessary to closely study the musical details that reveal composers' individuality and interpret their meaning in a multilayer context.

The identity of an individual is multiple and hybrid. The diverse identity of Korean contemporary music can properly be represented when supported through specific musical evidence. This topic endures as suitable for follow-up research.

Notes

1. Kim Youngmin, "Desire is Identity," *Hankook Ilbo*, November 4, 2019.
2. As Christopher Small states, "The question of who I am is the question of how I relate to other people. No one can have an identity without relationships with others." Christopher Small, *Musicking*, trans. Cho Sunwoo and Choi Yujun (Paju: Hyohyung Publishing Co., Ltd., 2004), 129.
3. Stuart Hall, et al, *The Future of Modernity*, trans. Jeon Hyokwan and Kim Soojin (Seoul: Hyunsil Culture Research, 2000), 351.
4. Gregor Dotzauer, "A Conversation with Unsuik Chin," *Music & Literature* 8 (2017): 187.
5. German musicologist Barbara Mittler who works on Chinese music points out a similar problem. She argues that the music of Chinese or Asian composers should not be confined to the cultural identity of "China" or "Asia," but should be understood in terms of their individuality. Barbara Mittler, "Wider den 'nationalen Stil.' Individuelles und Internationales in Chinas Neuer Musik," *Musik und kulturelle Identität* (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 2012), 603-606.
6. At that time, it was known by many names, such as "gayo(song)," "folk song," or "art song," but it refers to a song genre that combines Korean poetry and Western music. Kim Miyoung explains that the emergence of Korean art song in the 1920s was caused by combining nationalistic modern poetry after the 3.1 Movement with Western song styles. Kim Miyoung, *Korean Art Song in the 20th Century: A Historical and Systematic Approach* (Seoul: Minsokwon, 2018), 57-58.
7. According to critic Park Yonggu, gagoks of Kim Sunnam and Lee Geonwoo, differing from those of Hong Nanpa and Hyun Jaemyung, brought Korean gagok to an international level by creating a sense of time and place with unique self-expression. Park Yonggu, "Location of Joseon Gagok (1948)," *Music and Reality (1949)* (Seoul: Yesol, 1998), 12-13.
8. The term "Korean gagok(art song)" began to be used after the publication of *Korean Gagok Collection* (Hyangseonghoe) compiled by Han Gyudong in 1955. Most of the 50 songs of the 12 composers in the collection were widely sung and have established themselves as favorite songs of Koreans. Lee Kangsook, Kim Choonmee, and Min Kyungchan, *The Hundred Years of Western Music in Korea* (Seoul: Hyeonamsa, 2002), 279.
9. Kim Miyoung, who summarized the development of Korean art song in the late 20th century through the popularization of "jeongdaun [friendly] gagoks" and the growth of artist gagoks, uses Lee Sanggeun, La Unyung, Chung Hoegap, Byun Hoon, and Paik Byungdong as examples of the latter. See Kim Miyoung, *The History and System of Korean Songs*, Chapter 4.
10. After the premiere of gagok and chamber music pieces by eight young and senior composers at Sigong Hall on February 26, Oh Hwaseop published, "The Exhausted Creative Spirit: After Watching the 1st Presentation of the Korean Composer Association" (*Dong-A Ilbo* March 9, 1955), and Yun Isang published, "Refuting Oh Hwaseop's Composition Review" (*Kyunghyang Shinmun* March 16-17, 1955).
11. La Unyung Foundation. *La Unyung's Life: Until the Blood in My Hands Dries* (Seoul: Ungyeong Music, 2013), 37.

12. Lee Heekyung, "Reconstructing Korean New Music Scene During the 1960s," *Music and Korea* 52 (2016): 36.
13. La Unyung collected his writings from various magazines after liberation and published four essay collections, *Themes and Variation* (1964), *Monologue and Dialogue* (1970), *Style and Idea* (1975), and *Jehovah is My Shepherd* (1985). The first chapters all describe his theory on national music. The full texts can be found on his official website (launying.co.kr).
14. Hong Nanpa, "Comparing Eastern and Western Music," *Shindonga* (June 6, 1936), in Kim Soohyun and Lee Sojung, eds. *Korea Modern Music Article Collection*, Vol. 6 (Seoul: Minsokwon, 2008), 296.
15. "New Korean classical music" refers to music for Korean traditional musical instruments created through the Korean traditional music reform, and "New Korean music" refers to a mixture of Korean traditional and Western musical instruments. La Unyung, "Seven Articles on the Reform of Korean Traditional Music: Korean Traditional Music Must Break Away from Its Primitive Form." *Seoul Newspaper* May 1957, quoted in *La Unyung Essay Collection: Theme and Variation* (People's Library, 1964).
16. Lee Heekyung, "Reflections on the New Pathway of Traditional Korean Vocal Music in the Contemporary Compositions," *Eumakhak* (Musicology) 17 (2009): 129.
17. La Unyung, "For Korean music to be more Korean, the Japanese and Western elements should be eliminated first," *Chosun Ilbo* Sep. 1959, quoted in *La Unyung Essay Collection: Theme and Variation* (Public Library, 1964).
18. Lee Sanggeun, "On Korean Gagok" (1955), *Music and Korea* 7 (1994): 28.
19. Jeon Jeongim, "On the Discourse of Modernity in the Korean Music Community in the 1950s," *Understanding National Music Vol. 8* (Seoul: National Music Research Society, 2000), 75.
20. After the premiere, the composer and performer contributed columns about their creative intentions and practice process of this unusual attempt to the *Hankook Ilbo*. Chung Hoegap and Hwang Byungki, "Marriage of Korean and Western Music," *The Hankook Ilbo*, April 3, 1961.
21. Lee Jaesook and Kim Jeongja, who held their first gayageum solo concert in 1964, is a representative example. The increase in gayageum solo songs in the 1960s and 1970s was due to the performers, such as Lee Seongcheon's "Playground" (1966), Lee Haesik's "Clay Wall" (1969), Paik Byungdong's "Shinbyeolgok" (1972) and "Myung" (1975), and La Inyong's "Yong" (1979).
22. Later Chung Hoegap studied nongak, published *Jeonrabuk-do Nongak Collection* (1966), and wrote research papers. He then composed a piano composition "Korean Dance Song" (1967). Jeong Taebong, "Studying the World of Jeong Hoegap's Works," *Journal of Music and Theory* 4 (1999): 245-246.
23. Lee Heekyung, "Reflections on the New Pathway," 131.
24. For more detailed discussion, see Lee Heekyung, "Different Ways to Communicate with Tradition in Korean Contemporary Music, as a Case of Four Composers Born in the 1940s," *Eumakhak* 15 (2008).
25. Chorus "Woljeongmyeong" (1983) and string quartet "Julpungryu 2: A Song of Sky and Land" (1995) are good examples. Lee Youngjo was fascinated by the sound of Korean traditional musical instruments when he first visited the Gugak Center in 1964 thanks to the commander who was interested in Korean traditional music while serving

in the U.S. Eighth Army. However, he felt a sense of familiarity with the sound of a *jing* played by a chimney man. Lee Youngjo, *Resume Written on Manuscript Paper: Composer Lee Youngjo*, (Seoul: Jakeunnoori, 2003), 65-70.

26. From “Manga” (1983) to the posthumous violin concerto “Three Scenes” (2015), Kang Joonill considered “tradition” a significant topic. Rather than appropriating elements of traditional music, he actualized the compositional principle of traditional music and its spiritual value in his musical language. He made each note a living sound and blended the sensibility contained in the work into linear texture, the specificity of traditional music, and tone and expression methods of the Korean traditional instrument. Lee Heekyung, “Seeking Local Gestures and Spirit of Tradition: Joonil Kang’s Significance in the Contemporary Korean Music,” *Music and Korea* 50 (2015): 207.

27. For Yi Manbang’s understanding of tradition, see Choi Aekyung, *From Where to Where?: A Conversation with Composer Yi Manbang* (Seoul: Yesol, 2015), 35-57, 118-136, Chapters 6 and 7.

28. Lee Geonyong tried to represent “Korean sensibility” in “Baetaragi” (1992), Korean traditional music orchestra “Sangok” (1992), and “Evening Song” series (1997-2006). Lee Mikyung, *Challenge, or Blending: A Talk with Composer Lee Geonyong* (Incheon: Yejong, 2007), 146-167.

29. Hwang Sungho noted that interest in Korean traditional musical instrument had increased among composers in 1998. The National Gugak Center planned “New Rhythm for Three Days” and commissioned works to Western music composers such as Kang Joonil, Lee Youngjo, Jo Insun, Koo Bonu, Lim Jisun, and Kim Kibeom. There were some composer associations that hosted regular recitals with Korean traditional musical instruments. Hanyang University Music Research Institute also held creative concerts for Korean traditional musical instruments. Hwang Seongho, “The Composition Community Desperately Needs Efforts to Find Its Original Place.” *Literary Yearbook* (Seoul: Korea Culture and Arts Agency, 1999), 753.

30. Koo Bonu’s “Nah/fern” (1998), Na Hyoshin’s “Jijangbulgong II” (1999), and “Acrotova’s Muse” (2001) came out in collaboration with them. For the activities and meanings of the Korean Contemporary Music Ensemble, see Lee Heekyung, “The Role of the Contemporary Music Ensembles in the Twenty First-Century Korea, Focusing on CMEK, SORI, and Ensemble TIMF,” *Ewha Music Journal* 23, no. 2 (2019): 91-96.

31. Jeon Jiyoung. *Desire of Tradition and Coordinates: Claim for the Hope of Traditional Art* (Seongnam: Book Korea, 2018), 245-249.

32. Jeon, *Desire of Tradition and Coordinates*, 271.

33. Lee, Kim, & Min, *The Hundred Years*, 229.

34. If one searches Naver News Library for articles related to “national music” since 1948, one can roughly grasp its usage. Musicians spoke a lot about national music in 1961 and 1962 due to the aftermath of the May 16 military coup. After the division, Hong Nanpa, Hyun Jaemyung, Chae Dongsun, and Lee Heungryeol were all revered as “national” musicians in South Korea. By the 1970s, the term “national music” was mainly used in the Korean traditional music circles.

35. Kim Eunyong, “National Music Imagined by Western Music Composers in the 1950s: Between ‘People’ and ‘Nation,’” *Music and Reality* 58 (2019): 105.

36. In the eyes of Park Yonggu, who illegally entered Japan at the end of 1948 and returned immediately after the April 19 Revolution, the Korean music trope seemed

to have “only a narrow factional dispute among ‘lords,’” and the serious worries of the liberation space did not continue. Park Yonggu, et al., *Park Yonggu: Planner of the Korean Peninsula Renaissance* (Seoul: Suryusanbang, 2011), 413.

37. La Unyung, “Adopting Foreign Music Theories in the Context of Choseon,” *Kyunghyang Shinmun* October 7, 1947.

38. Similar tone appeared in Kim Soonae’s “My Regret on Music” (*Kyunghyang Shinmun* November 21, 1946). Chae Dongsun (1901-53) explored the possibility of Korean folk songs by collecting them from the Japanese colonial era onward.

39. La Unyung, *Contemporary Harmony: Harmonic Analysis and Korean Harmony Studies* (Seoul: Sekwang Music Publishing Co., Ltd., 1982, 1990 revised), “introduction”: For a detailed discussion of La Unyung’s Korean harmony, see Lee Geonyong, “A Study on La Unyung’s Theory of Harmony,” *Music and Korea* 11 (1996).

40. Moon Hogeun (1946-2001), the eldest son of Pastor Moon Ikhwan, had formed a theater club with Lee Geonyong when he was a student at Seoul National University of Music. His debut as an opera director was Menotti’s “The Medium” and “The Old Lady and the Thief,” staged by Kim Jakyung Opera Company at the National Theater in 1977. He left for Europe in 1979 and began to draw attention by directing “Aida” at the National Opera Company in 1982, and after returning to Korea in 1984, he served as a professional opera director. For the activities and historical significance of Moon Hogeun and the Institute of Korean Music Theater, see Choi Aekyung, “Music Theater Experiment by the Institute of Korean Music Theater,” *Eumakhak* 36 (2019).

41. Lee Geonyong, “The Development of Musical Discourses in the 80s: Korean Music, Song Movement, National Music,” *Eumakhak* 2 (1990): 88.

42. Mineumhyop was an organization established to launch a national art movement in music after June Democracy Movement in 1987. It started as the National Music Commission (Chairman Moon Hogeun) under the Minyechong(National Arts Federation) in 1988 and was officially established in 1990. (No Dongeun, Lee Geonyong, Kang Joonil were consecutively appointed as a chair, followed by Korean traditional music figures, including Kim Cheolho, Oh Yongrok and Kim Sangcheol.) As a solidarity group pursuing progressive music that encompassed Western music, Korean traditional music, and popular music, it was disbanded in the summer of 2008. See the Encyclopedia of Korean National Culture <http://encykorea.aks.ac.kr/Contents/Item/E0072281>

43. Composers Lee Geonyong, Kang Joonil, Kim Chulho, and musicologist Kim Choonmee participated as committee members in the Institute of Korean Music Theater, established in December 1986. Moon Hogeun’s thoughts on Korean music theater can be found in Moon Hogeun’s first anniversary collection compiled by Kim Choonmee. See Moon Hogeun and Kim Choonmee, *Love Song Sung in Barefoot* (Seoul: Veloche, 2002).

44. The shift in Moon Hogeun’s interest from a musical theater to a national opera may have been influenced by his father Pastor Moon Ikhwan’s visit to North Korea and subsequent imprisonment in 1989. Moon Hogeun, who had been restricted from his activities until the civilian government was established in 1993, formed the National Music Committee under the Minyechong and paid attention to the reality of division and unification issues.

45. Choi, “Music Theater Experiment,” 85.

46. The experiment of the Institute of Korean Music Theater continued in a more evolved form through “Sejong Camerata,” created by Lee Geonyong as the head of the

Seoul Opera Company in 2012. Lee Heekyung, "A Significant Step Toward Korean Music Theater: Goh Yeonok and Choe Uzong's Opera 'As the Moon Flowing on the Water,'" *Korean Contemporary Composers and Compositions* 9 (2016): 84-85.

47. Following its inaugural issue in 1990, a total of nine volumes were published, including *Understanding National Music* 2-6, *The Future of Korean Music in the 21st Century* (1999), *National Music and Modernity* (2000), and *A Different End of National Music, Music Ecology* (2002). Each published special issues, research articles, translations, criticisms, and resources to deal with the theoretical and practical tasks of national music.

48. Kim Choonmee and Lee Soyoung, "Conversation: The Trajectory and Prospect of National Music Movement in the 80s and 90s: Focusing on the Mainstream Music Community," *Understanding National Music* (Seoul: Hanul Publishing, 1992), 22.

49. Kang Joonil, Yoo Byungeun, Lee Geonyong, Jeong Taebong, Hwang Seongho, and Heo Youngghan, "Conversation: The Trajectory of the Third Generation and Korean Music," *Nangmn Eumak* 16 (1992): 11-12.

50. Koo Bonu also expressed his blatant rejection of the trajectory of Korean music or national music in the 1990s, calling it a "cheap imitation." Bonu Koo, "Beyond 'Cheap Imitation,'" *The World of Music* 45 no. 2 (2003): 133-135.

51. See Kim Choonmee, Yoo Byungeun, Lee Kangyul, Jo Inseon, and Hwang Seongho, "Roundtable: What are Composers in Their 30s Doing Now?" *Nangman Eumak* 7 (1990).

52. Regarding the activities of the Korea Festival Ensemble, which took the lead in playing new works in the 1980s and 1990s, see Lee Heekyung, "The Role of the Contemporary Music Ensembles," 84-87.

53. Kang Dongsuk performed Yun Isang's Violin Concertos No. 1 and No. 3 at the 1994 Yun Isang Music Festival and the 1997 ISCM World Music Festival, while Paik Kunwoo premiered Kang Sukhi's Piano Concerto in Paris and Seoul in 1998 and 1999. Now, performing works created by Korean composers by Korean performers on the world stage has become so natural that it no longer attracts attention.

54. In this project, Kang Joonil's "Hae-Maji Gut" (2001) for cello, piano, and janggu, and Korean American composer Kim Jacqueline Jeeyoung's "Tryst" (2001) for oboe, cello, and gayageum with female voice were included as Korean composers' works.

55. For this, see Lee Heekyung, "The Issue of 'Locality' in Ligeti's Works since 1990s," *Journal of the Musicological Society of Korea* 9 no. 3 (2006). Recently, research has also been conducted to re-examine the life and music of Ligeti, who was called a global cosmopolitan modernist, in the cultural context of Eastern Europe. Amy Bauer and Márton Kerékfy eds., *Györy Ligeti's Cultural Identities* (London: Routledge, 2018).

56. Lee Heekyung, "The Issue of 'Locality' in Ligeti's Works since 1990s," 51.

57. For example, Kim Texu (1980-), who is active in the United States, writes works by using the sound of selling Korean rice cakes and buckwheat noodles on winter nights, popping water balloons, bouncing basketballs, scenes of Korean elementary schools, Korean mothers' lullabies, and Sudoku, etc. (See the composer Kim's website at <https://www.texukim.com/works.html>. Kim Ingyu (1984-), who breaks away from the institutionalized framework of the composition scene and seeks his potential as a freelancer composer, presents emotions captured in the poetry of contemporary poets in a different performance format, works as a member of the community, and turns his daily

life into a musical narrative. Kim, Inkyu. "In Search of Simple and Humble Beauty." *Korean Contemporary Composers and Compositions* 16 (2020).

58. Choi Yujun, "'Spacial Turn' and Reconstructing Musical 'Place,'" *Korean Contemporary Composers and Compositions* 14 (2019), 39.

59. Choi Yujun, "From Ethnicity/Nationality to Locality: 'Decolonial Cosmopolitanism' of Korean Music," *Music and Culture* 42 (2020): 24.

60. Lee Heekyung, "The Concept of 'Assemblage' as a Methodology for Composer Studies," *Nangman Eumak* 72 (2006): 44.

61. Hong Jeongsoo, *Such Music, What Thoughts? The View on Music of Early Western Music Composers in Korea. Korean Music Twentieth Century Vol. 2.* (Busan: Sejong Publishing, 2018).

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