

THE ST. OLAF COLLEGE DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC
presents

KOREAN COMPOSERS FESTIVAL

CONCERT NO. 2

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 24, 2023 • URNESS RECITAL HALL • 3:15 P.M.

PROGRAM

Variations on Arirang

Soomin Kim (b. 1995)

This piece is a set of variations based on *Arirang*, which is a folk tune that is close to every Korean's heart. Each variation highlights different characteristics of *Arirang*; for example, the first variation introduces the five notes of the scale in the order that they appear in the original folk tune; the fourth one, the longest and the most chromatic, is based on a diminished version of a pentatonic scale. The original tune is finally revealed at the very end with luscious harmony.

The meaning of "Arirang" remains unclear to this day. Regardless, *Arirang* to me means resilience and perseverance that my people have shown for centuries in the times of war, colonization, financial crisis and national tragedy. This piece is my homage to the folk tune that has seen Korea through the centuries of hardship and to the people that survived through it.

Morgan Ely, *marimba*

Collection of Distant Memories for Guitar and Clarinet

Nicky Sohn (b. 1992)

I. Grilled Chestnut

II. Ramen and Nine-Holed Coal

III. Mom and Mackerel

MIDWEST PREMIERE

These clarinet and guitar pieces are based on well-known Korean melodies. The first evokes memories of roasted chestnuts on winter streets. The original melody is transformed to reflect nostalgia. *Ramen and Nine-Holed-Cole* is a playful tune from an animated TV show, with the melody hidden and stretched out in the composition. Lastly, *Mom and Mackerel* is a famous pop song from the 80s, expressing love through food, a common love language for older generations. Despite the upbeat and energetic nature of the original song, the composition shares an intimate sentiment. Overall, the pieces are groovy, cheerful, and evoke memories of beloved foods and cherished moments.

Keeheon Nam, *clarinet* • Austin Wahl, *guitar*

Dear Mommy and Sister

YoungJo Lee (b. 1943)

Young Jo Lee ranks among the most outstanding and internationally renowned Korean composers. His first major teacher was his father, Heung Ryul Lee (1909–80), one of Korea's most important composers of art songs. Young Jo Lee earned his bachelor's and master's degrees from Yonsei University in Seoul. In 1975, he continued his education at the Staatliche Hochschule für Musik in Munich where he studied composition with Carl Orff (1895–1982) and Wilhelm Killmayer (1927–2017). Lee earned two doctorates from the American Conservatory of Music in Chicago, in composition (1987) and in horn performance (1989).

Lee was chairman of the theory and composition department at the American Conservatory from 1989 to 1994. Upon returning to Seoul in 1994, he became professor of composition at the Korean National University of the Arts, and was dean there from 1997 until his retirement in 2008. He later became dean of the Korea National Institute for the Gifted in Arts and chairman of the Korean Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism.

The original choral version of *Dear Mommy and Sister* dates from 1962. The version for soprano, trumpet, and piano was completed in 2017 and is dedicated to Craig B. Parker. The premiere performance of this version occurred on January 19, 2018 at the second Composition in Asia Symposium and Festival by Jumi Kim (soprano), Craig B. Parker (trumpet), and E. J. Choe (piano). The English translation of the original Korean is as follows:

*Dear mommy, dearest sister,
Let us live beside the river
With the light
With the glittering sand in the courtyard
With the song of the rushes
Blowing beyond the walls
Beside the river
Let us live
Dearest mommy, dearest sister.*

Jumi Kim, *soprano* • Craig Parker, *trumpet* • Koeun Grace Lee, *piano*

Distant Memories

HyeKyung Lee (b. 1959)

Distant Memories was commissioned by/written for Ralph Farris (of Ethel). Some memories are vague, some are blurred, and some are even absent. Some memories are distant, but still stay vivid and evoke various emotions of that time. The piece utilizes the uneven repetitions of the notes, fluctuating arpeggios, and frequent changes of the meter and keys. The piece explores distant memories in the past.

Dahm Huh, *viola* • HyeKyung Lee, *piano*

가위 (Scissors): Fantasia Toccata

Jiyoun Chung (b. 1982)

In her work, *가위 (Scissors): Fantasia Toccata* for solo piano, Chung portrays Korean traditional percussion music through the visual and rhythmic features, as well as through her own interpretation of the sounds and pitches from the instrument. In addition to the Korean instrument, she incorporates a particular object used in an act derived from Korea that may not be familiar even to native Koreans; “Scissor Hitting.” While integrating traditional Western style musical technique, in her own way, Jiyoun Chung emphasizes and brings into light a unique aspect of Korean culture.

April Ryun Kim, *piano*

Pali-Pali!

Texu Kim (b. 1980)

Pali-pali is a common Korean expression, which is similar to ‘chop-chop’ in English but much more present, almost as a lifestyle – hard working AND efficient. Many South Korean people seem to believe this to have played a significant role in South Korea’s rapid economic growth in the late 20th century.

The title of this piece *Pali-Pali!* came from the situation in which I actually had to compose the piece very quickly, due to the last-minute commission. I did not just accept but ENJOYED this challenge (all thanks to this Pali-pali spirit I inherited), by making this piece about a composer dealing with deadlines!

The opening of this piece is somewhat auspicious and contemplative, as when one begins a new composition project. Then, the music becomes anxious, depicting the moment when the composer becomes aware of the deadline approaching but tries to stay calm and focused. The music becomes frenetic and frantic, eventually to explode! Will the composer make it to the deadline? We will figure it out!

Yu-Fang Chen, *violin* • Peter Opie, *cello*

*Unauthorized photography or video and audio recording is prohibited.
Please silence cell phones.*

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Morgan Ely

Morgan Ely is a percussionist from North Pole, Alaska who enjoys a wide variety of musical styles and settings. She has studied percussion for the last 6 years and is pursuing a degree in music and social work at St. Olaf College. Morgan currently plays in the St. Olaf Band as well as the St. Olaf chapel services and the dance department.

Keeheon Nam

Korean-American clarinetist Keeheon Nam is a dynamic musician who excels as a performer, teacher, and administrator. He has showcased his musical talent in a variety of settings, from intimate dive bars to Carnegie Hall. Keeheon's performances have captivated audiences ranging from small gatherings to large crowds of 20,000. Equally adept at solo, chamber, and orchestral performances, he is a founding member of Kodan Quintet and has performed with esteemed ensembles such as the Houston Ballet, Nashville Symphony, and WindSync. Keeheon has been recognized with several national and international accolades, including being a prizewinner at the 2022 International Clarinet Association Competition.

As an advocate for new music, Keeheon actively commissions and premieres works by contemporary composers, with an emphasis on expanding Korean representation in new music. Alongside his musical pursuits, Keeheon is passionate about teaching and has worked with students of various age groups, both privately and as a Morse Teaching Fellow at Juilliard. He holds degrees from Vanderbilt University's Blair School of Music, The Juilliard School, and Rice University's Shepherd School of Music.

Beyond his musical endeavors, Keeheon is also a certified food safety manager and consultant in his parents' Korean restaurant, Kimchi Tofu House, located in Minneapolis' Stadium Village.

Austin Wahl

Minnesota native Dr. Austin Wahl is an internationally acclaimed guitarist, teacher, and performer, known for his numerous competition wins and exceptional talent. His repertoire spans both traditional and unconventional pieces, showcasing his versatility and passion for music. Wahl has premiered his own groundbreaking solo transcription of Aaron Copland's Rodeo suite and is currently composing a solo guitar suite inspired by international events during the Cold War. He has delivered captivating concerts and masterclasses at prestigious venues and festivals worldwide.

In addition to classical guitar, Wahl is a skilled bluegrass guitarist, having performed with renowned groups and even shared the stage with banjoist Béla Fleck. He is also an accomplished fingerstyle and electric guitarist, and he has built his own electric guitar, known as the "Wahl-o-caster."

Beyond the guitar, Wahl is an accomplished mandolinist, performing classical and folk music. As a dedicated teacher, he believes in the transformative power of music and teaches various genres at MacPhail Center for Music. Wahl holds degrees from the Eastman School of Music where he studied with Nicholas Goluses.

Jumi Kim

Jumi Kim has been a featured soloist at various concerts collaborating with numerous orchestras and ensembles in the Bay Area and the Central Coast, including Symphony of the Vines and Opera San Luis Obispo. Ms. Kim taught voice at Indiana Wesleyan University in Marion, IPFW (Indiana University-Purdue University Fort Wayne), and Cuesta College in San Luis Obispo. She received her doctoral degree in vocal performance from Ball State University, master's from Indiana University, and bachelor's from Ewha Womans University in Seoul, Korea. Currently, Ms. Kim is an active soloist in the Bay Area while serving as executive director of Celeste Solo Ensemble, director of the Interfaith Center at the Presidio Sunday Concert Series, and music director at Grace Presbyterian Church in Walnut Creek. She also teaches at Oikos University in Oakland.

Craig B. Parker

Since 1982, Dr. Craig B. Parker has been on the faculty at Kansas State University, where he teaches music history courses and plays trumpet with the KSU Faculty Brass Quintet. A graduate of the University of Georgia and UCLA, he has done post-doctoral work at the University of Michigan and Harvard. The juxtaposition of Western and Asian elements in contemporary compositions, both by American and Asian composers, ranks among his primary research and performance interests.

Koeun Grace Lee

A South Korean native, Koeun Grace Lee, holds a DMA in Piano Performance and Post-Master's Certificate in Music Theory Pedagogy from the University of North Carolina-Greensboro, an MM in Piano Performance from the University of Missouri-Kansas City Conservatory of Music, and a BM in Piano and Piano Pedagogy and Artist Diploma from the University of Tennessee-Knoxville. Her debut album, Variations on a Theme by Stefan Wolpe and Other Selected Piano Works, was released through Navona records. She has performed at New Music Chicago Presents Concert, Roosevelt University, The University of South Florida, and many other venues in the U.S. Her performance of Folksong Revisited, a solo piano work of Korean composer Jean Ahn, was featured on WFMT Music in Chicago in 2021 and 2023. She also was a featured artist on WWFM Cadenza with David Osenberg. She is a freelance pianist, independent scholar, and a piano instructor at Mattix Music Studio.

Dahm Huh

Dr. Dahm Huh has appeared as a soloist and chamber musician on four continents. She has played in major concert halls, such as Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center, Spain's Zaragoza Auditorium, Tokyo Metropolitan Arts Space, Shanghai Oriental Arts Center, Hong Kong Cultural Centre, Seoul Arts Center, the United Nations. She established Starry Duo violin-viola ensemble whose two albums were released worldwide in 2015 and 2020. In the 2022-2023 academic year, she gave presentations, masterclasses, and guest artist recitals at the University of Colorado Boulder, Colorado State University, University of Central Florida, University of South Florida, and Florida College. Additionally, universities in Korea, including Hongik University, Konkuk University, Anyang University, Hannam University, invited her as a special lecturer, on topics of 'How Music Connects Us Across Cultures,' 'The Role of the Artist in Society and the Entrepreneurial Mindset,' 'Digital Storytelling Through Music,' and 'K-Pop and K-Classical from 1990s to Present.'

HyeKyung Lee

An active composer/pianist, HyeKyung Lee has written works for diverse genres and media: from toy piano to big concertos, from electronic music to children's choir. The commissions include the Bonnie McElveen Commission for Maestro Gerard Schwarz and the Eastern Music Festival Orchestra, Renée B. Fisher Piano Competition, the Meg Quigley Vivaldi Bassoon Competition, and Columbus Youth Choir and String Orchestra. Born in Seoul, Korea, HyeKyung studied at Yonsei University in Seoul, and University of Texas at Austin where she received MM, DMA in composition and a certificate in piano performance. She is Associate Professor of Music at Denison University in Granville, Ohio.

April Ryun Kim

A native of Minnesota, Dr. April Ryun Kim is currently Assistant Professor of Music at St. Olaf College. She has given numerous performances as a soloist, collaborative pianist, and chamber musician, showcasing a broad range of repertoire. She has been featured as a soloist with the St. Olaf Orchestra as senior soloist and has won winning prizes from competitions including Thursday Musical and Schubert Club. As a collaborative pianist, she has performed with artists including Micah Wilkinson, principal trumpet of the Pittsburgh Symphony, percussionist Eri Isomura, and pianist William Chapman Nyaho. As a passionate advocate for new music, Dr. Kim regularly performs works by living composers.

Dr. Kim holds a DMA in Piano Performance from the University of Missouri - Kansas City, an MM in Solo and Collaborative Performance from the Cleveland Institute of Music, and a BM in Piano Performance with a Collaborative Emphasis from St. Olaf College.

Yu-Fang Chen

A native of Taiwan, Yu-Fang Chen is assistant professor of violin at Ball State University. Chen received her Doctoral of Musical Arts degrees on both violin and viola performance from the University of Missouri-Kansas City in 2013. As a sought-after performer and pedagogy, she has been invited to teach and perform at various music institutions and festivals in United States, Europe, and Southeast Asia.

Chen has won many awards and competitions and her career as a performing artist is extensive. As an enthusiastic performer of contemporary music, she has commissioned, premiered, and recorded many compositions by living composers. Her recordings can be found in Albany, ABLAZE and PARMA Records.

She has served as assistant professor of violin and viola at Washburn University. In addition, she was a member of the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra, the Kansas City Symphony, the Wisconsin Chamber Orchestra, the Des Moines Symphony Orchestra and the Academy of Taiwan. For more information visit her website: <http://yufangchen.weebly.com>.

Peter Opie

Peter Opie is associate professor of cello at Ball State University. He has performed as a soloist and chamber musician in Europe, Asia, South America, and the United States. Formerly on the faculty of Eastern Michigan University, he has given cello and chamber music master classes at many universities and conservatoires around the world, including the Oberlin Conservatory, University of Michigan, University of Illinois, St Petersburg State Conservatory, and the National University of Colombia. Also active as an orchestral musician, he performs frequently with the Indianapolis and Detroit Symphony Orchestras and has served as acting principal for both the Fort Wayne Philharmonic and Indianapolis Chamber Orchestra.

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