

Korean Percussion For Contemporary World: Exploring SOAS Studies in Music

When it comes to the captivating world of music, ordinary sounds can be transformed into extraordinary rhythms that touch our hearts and souls. One such captivating genre is Korean percussion, which has gained immense popularity in recent years. This article delves into the enchanting landscape of Korean percussion and explores its significance in contemporary music from the perspective of SOAS Studies in Music.

Understanding Korean Percussion

Korean percussion, also known as 'Samulnori,' encompasses a wide variety of traditional percussive instruments native to Korea. Its rhythmic patterns and vibrant beats create an immersive experience that takes listeners on a cultural journey. The intricate movements of the performers and the powerful sounds produced by these instruments resonate with audiences worldwide.

The history of Korean percussion dates back centuries, originating from the folk rituals and agricultural ceremonies of Korea. Primarily performed by farmers and laborers, it gradually evolved into a form of entertainment and artistic expression. Today, it is deeply rooted in Korean cultural heritage and is celebrated as a means of connecting with tradition.

SamulNori: Korean Percussion for a Contemporary World (SOAS Studies in Music)

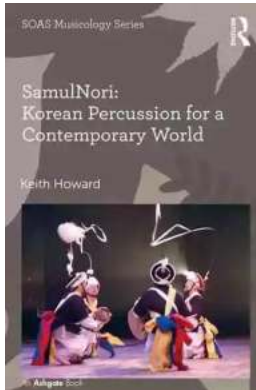
by Keith Howard(1st Edition, Kindle Edition)

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SOAS Studies in Music

SOAS, the School of Oriental and African Studies, is a leading institution offering unique perspectives on the study of music. Recognizing the importance of preserving and promoting diverse musical traditions, SOAS has played an instrumental role in developing an extensive program in Korean percussion.

With a broad range of courses and research opportunities, SOAS promotes cross-cultural understanding and offers students a chance to explore the rich musical traditions of Korea, including their intricate percussive techniques. Students are introduced to various traditional instruments, such as the Janggu (hourglass-shaped drum), Buk (barrel drum), Jing (gong), and Kkwaenggwari (small gong).

The program at SOAS goes beyond teaching the technical aspects of playing these instruments. Students are encouraged to delve deep into the cultural context and historical significance of Korean percussion. They explore how it has evolved and interacted with contemporary music, enabling them to create innovative and culturally-informed compositions.

The Significance of Korean Percussion in Contemporary Music

Korean percussion has transcended traditional boundaries and made its mark in contemporary music across the globe. Musicians and composers have embraced its rhythmic complexity and vibrant energy, infusing it with various genres to create captivating compositions.

Korean percussion has gained popularity in diverse music styles, including jazz, rock, and experimental compositions. Its unique tonalities and rhythmic patterns add a fresh dimension to these genres, captivating audiences and challenging preconceived notions of what music can be.

The symbiotic relationship between Korean percussion and contemporary music has led to groundbreaking collaborations and fusion projects. Musicians from different cultural backgrounds come together to create mesmerizing performances that bridge cultural divides and celebrate the universal language of music.

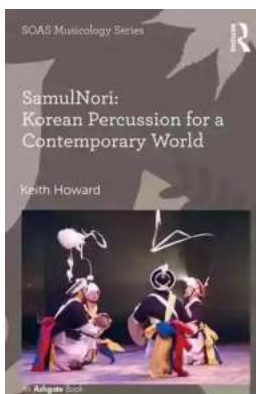
The Impact of SOAS Studies in Music

SOAS Studies in Music has not only contributed to the exploration and appreciation of Korean percussion but has also influenced the contemporary music scene. By fostering a deep understanding and appreciation for the cultural significance of Korean percussion, musicians and composers from SOAS have played a vital role in bringing this ancient tradition to the forefront of contemporary music.

The graduates from SOAS Studies in Music have gone on to become influential performers, educators, and artists who continue to push the boundaries of musical expression. They have established collaborations with renowned artists from around the world, adapting Korean percussion to various styles and genres, thereby enriching the global music landscape.

Korean percussion, with its rich history and captivating sounds, has found its place in contemporary music thanks to the efforts of institutions like SOAS Studies in Music. By providing a comprehensive understanding of the cultural context and technical skills, SOAS has empowered musicians to explore intercultural collaborations and push the boundaries of musical experimentation.

The enchanting rhythms and melodies of Korean percussion continue to captivate the world, serving as a testament to the power of music in transcending cultural barriers. Through initiatives such as the program at SOAS, the tradition of Korean percussion will undoubtedly continue to thrive, enriching both traditional and contemporary music in the process.



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SamulNori is a percussion quartet which has given rise to a genre, of the same name, that is arguably Korea's most successful 'traditional' music of recent times. Today, there are dozens of amateur and professional samulnori groups. There is a canon of samulnori pieces, closely associated with the first founding quartet but played by all, and many creative evolutions on the basic themes, made by the rapidly growing number of virtuosic percussionists. And the genre is the focus of

an abundance of workshops, festivals and contests. Samulnori is taught in primary and middle schools; it is part of Korea's national education curriculum. It has dedicated institutes, and there are a number of workbooks devoted to helping wannabe 'samulnorians'. It is a familiar part of Korean performance culture, at home and abroad, in concerts but also in films and theatre productions. SamulNori uses four instruments: kkwaenggwari and ching small and large gongs, and changgo and puk drums. These are the instruments of local percussion bands and itinerant troupes that trace back many centuries, but samulnori is a recent development of these older traditions: it was first performed in February 1978. This volume explores this vibrant percussion genre, charting its origins and development, the formation of the canon of pieces, teaching and learning strategies, new evolutions and current questions relating to maintaining, developing, and sustaining samulnori in the future.



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