

COMBINING OF KOREAN TRADITIONAL PERFORMANCE AND RECENT  
GERMAN TECHNIQUES IN ISANG YUN'S *KONTRASTE: ZWEI STÜCKE FÜR*

*VIOLINE SOLO* (1987)

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Isang Yun (1917-1995) embraced a masterful combination of two elements derived from his life: his Korean cultural upbringing and Western musical traditions. This dissertation explores Yun's distinctive style through an analysis of his *Kontraste: Zwei Stücke für Violine Solo*.

Following the introduction (Chapter 1), Chapter 2 contains a brief biography of Isang Yun, and explores the compositions of his Korean period (1917-1955) and his European period (1956-1995). It also discusses how Yun's musical styles changed during these two periods as a result of important life events and due to cultural and political influences. Chapter 3 examines Korean instruments such as *Kayakem*, *Hae-Kem*, and *Pak*; discusses *Nonghyun* (traditional string techniques of ornamentation in Korean music); and introduces Korean performance techniques. This chapter also provides explanations of these concepts, illustrated through various examples. A subsequent discussion illuminates *Yin-Yang* theory and *Jeong-Jung-Dong*, both elements of Taoist philosophy that influenced Yun's compositional style. This is followed by explanations of *Hauptton* and *Umspielung*, two compositional techniques that Yun developed and employed in *Kontraste*. Yun created the idea of *Hauptton* to reflect the Korean traditional concept of a single note. He used the term *Umspielung* ("playing around" in German) to describe his interpretation of the four traditional techniques of *Nonghyun* within a Western notational framework. In Chapter 5, analysis of *Kontraste*

reveals how the piece's contrasting elements represent the concepts of *Yin-Yang* and *Jeong-Jung-Dong*, and shows how the violin imitates the sounds of Korean traditional instruments and instrumental technique. Yun's adaption of Korean traditional performance techniques to the violin in *Kontraste* is aimed at combining East and West and producing a new aesthetic.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### Significance and Purpose of Study

Isang Yun (1917-1995) is regarded as the first Korean-German composer. He is renowned for the masterful implementation of the Korean traditional performance techniques in his music. Born and raised in South Korea, he spent most of his creative life in Western Europe, especially Germany. Yun applied performance practice of traditional Korean instruments to Western ones, imitating traditional Korean sounds on the violin. This study illuminates the process by which Yun translated the concepts of traditional Korean instrumental sound production to Western instruments, and focuses on his unique compositional techniques in *Kontraste: Zwei Stücke für Violine Solo*. The purpose of this study is to answer three questions: (1) which Korean traditional performance techniques does Yun use in *Kontraste*; (2) how did Taoist philosophy contribute to the piece's composition; and (3) which of Yun's unique compositional techniques were used to compose *Kontraste*?

An analysis of *Kontraste* shows how Yun reconciled Korean traditional instruments and techniques with Western musical notation and style. The two parts of *Kontraste* reveal how the contrasting elements represent the Taoist concepts of *Yin-Yang* and *Jeong-Jung-Dong*. Moreover, an analysis of *Kontraste* will clarify Yun's concepts of *Hauptton* and *Umspielung*.

## State of Research

Most of the works in Yun's creative output were composed during the time he spent in Germany. Therefore, most of the materials and publications about Yun and his works are in German. There are very few sources regarding Yun's compositional output that have been translated into English, and many of the materials in Korean are also translations from original German sources. There are, however, some useful sources in English. In *Music of Twentieth-Century Avant-Garde*, a chapter about Isang Yun contains explanations of Yun's background and significant works.<sup>1</sup> Francisco F. Feliciano's *Four Asian Contemporary Composers: The Influence of Tradition in Their Works* contains information on Yun and important concepts of his works. It shows how Yun creates his unique musical sound, especially the techniques which imitate traditional Korean instruments.<sup>2</sup> A dialogue about the life and works of Isang Yun reveals why Yun uses Korean traditional music in his compositions.<sup>3</sup> *한국전통악기* (The Korean Traditional Instruments) contains explanations of the Korean traditional instruments Yun uses in *Kontraste*, including *Kayakeum* (가야금), *Hae-Kem* (해금), and *Pak* (박).<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Andrew McCredie, "Isang Yun," in *Music of Twentieth-Century Avant-Garde: A Bio-critical Sourcebook*, ed. Larry Sitsky (London: Greenwood Press, 2002).

<sup>2</sup> Francisco F. Feliciano, *Four Asian Contemporary Composers: The Influence of Tradition in Their Works* (Quezon City: New Day Publishers, 1983), 35.

<sup>3</sup> Luise Rinser and Isang Yun, *Der Verwundete Drache* (The Wounded Dragon), trans. From to German to Korean (Seoul: Randomhouse Korea, 2005).

<sup>4</sup> Tael Ryong Son, *한국전통악기* (The Korean Traditional Instruments) (Daegu: Yeungnam Univeristy, 2003).

## CHAPTER 2

### ISANG YUN'S LIFE AND COMPOSITIONS

Isang Yun's musical styles can be divided into two main periods: the Korean period (1917-1955) and European period (1956-1995). The European period further subdivides into three sub periods: the first (1956-1971), the second (1972-1982), and the third (1983-1995).<sup>5</sup>

#### The Korean Period

Isang Yun, born on September 17, 1917 in Sanchung of Kyungnam, South Korea, during the Japanese colonial period (1910-1945), was the son of the Korean poet Ki-Hyun Yun. Yun moved to Chungmu (now Tongyeong) at the age of three. At the age of seven, he began to study Chinese philosophy, learn calligraphy, and read Chinese literature. He started to compose at age fourteen. In Seoul, he began his first formal training in harmony with a neighbor who played the violin. From 1935 to 1937, he studied composition, music theory, and cello at the Osaka Conservatory in Japan. In 1939, he went to Tokyo to study counterpoint with Tomijiro Ikenouchi. During World War II, Yun participated in resistance activities against the Japanese. In 1943, he was imprisoned for two months due to these activities. He lived in hiding until liberation from the Japanese, after which he took the first job he could find teaching music in Tongyeong and Pusan.

During the Korean War (1950-1953), which resulted in the tragic division of Korea into South and North, Yun composed songs for children, compiled in the

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<sup>5</sup> Kyung Ha Lee, "A Comparative Study of Selected Violin Works of Isang Yun: Gasa für Violine und Klavier (1963) and Sonate für Violine und Klavier NR. 1 (1991)" (DMA diss., Ohio State University, 2009), 5-13.

collection *Dalmuri*. He also wrote chamber works during the war. In 1955, he was the first composer to receive the Fifth Great Culture Award in Seoul for his String Quartet No. 1 and Piano Trio. It was because of this award that Yun decided in June 1956 to go to Europe in order to study Western music.

### The European Period

Isang Yun studied theory with Pierre Ravel and composition with Tony Aubin at the Paris Conservatory from 1956-1957. He went to Berlin's Hochschule für Musik, where he studied composition with Boris Blacher, counterpoint with Reinhard Schwarz-Schilling, and twelve-tone technique with Josef Rufer from 1958-1959. In 1959, *Fünf Klavierstücke* (1958) and *Musik für Sieben Instrumente* (1959), based on twelve-tone technique, were selected for the International Gaudeamus Music Festival in Billthoven, Netherlands and the Darmstadt festival in Germany, and were premiered in both places. After these two festivals, Yun was able to attain fame in Europe. In 1966, he came to study and lecture for two months at the Tanglewood and Aspen festivals in the United States. He was then awarded a grant by the Ford Foundation, and settled in Schmargendorf, East Berlin with his family in 1964.

During the first part of Yun's European period, he composed String Quartet No. 3 (1959), *Fluktuation für Orchester* (1960), *Loyang für Kammer Ensemble* (1962), *Gasa für Violine und Klavier* (1963), *Reak für Großes Orchester* (1966), and *Namo* (1971). *Reak für Großes Orchester*, which was first played by the South German Radio Symphony Orchestra in the Donaueschingen Music Festival, was adapted to Western music by blending the Western instrumentation with Asian musical elements. Yun also

composed three operas during this time: *Der Traum Des Liu Tung* (1965), *Die Witwe des Schmetterlings* (1967), and *Sim Tjong* (1971). *Sim Tjong*, which was based on a Korean fairy-tale, was written for the opening ceremony of the Twentieth Olympic Games in Munich in 1972. It was early in this part of Yun's European period that he applied his *Hauptton*<sup>6</sup> technique.

As a chair of the Korean Society in Germany, Yun organized meetings to discuss Korean re-unification and the re-establishment of democracy there. In 1963, Yun visited North Korea in order to experience some of his cultural heritage, in which he had always been interested.<sup>7</sup> The painting style called *Sasindo* in fresco, found inside an ancient tomb in North Korea, inspired Yun to compose *Image* (1968). However, Yun's political activities and this journey resulted in him and his wife being abducted from their home in Berlin to Seoul by the South Korean secret police under Chung Hee Park's regime on June 17, 1967.<sup>8</sup> This event has come to be known as the East Berlin Event in Yun's life. Park's government considered Yun to be a communist, and even though he was neither a communist nor a spy, he was imprisoned, tortured, and sentenced to death for treason. In order to secure Yun's release, over 200 musicians, including Igor Stravinsky, Herbert von Karajan, Karlheinz Stockhausen, and György Ligeti, wrote petitions, and the West German government employed diplomatic pressure. After two years, Yun was allowed to return to Berlin. In 1970, the South Korean government granted him amnesty. In the same year, he received the Kiel Culture Prize. In 1971, he earned

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<sup>6</sup> A meaning of *Hauptton* technique is 'main-tone or principal tone'. This technique organized the pedal point of long sustain pedal point in Yun's works.

<sup>7</sup> Soo-Ja Lee, *내 남편 윤이상* (My Husband, Isang Yun), vol 2 (Seoul: Changjak kwa Bipyungsa, 1998), 15.

<sup>8</sup> Chung Hee Park (1917-1979) was the third president of South Korea from 1962 to 1979.

German citizenship. He then became a composition professor at the Hochschule der Künste Berlin.

In the second part of his European period, Yun began to use traditional Western musical titles in his works; “etude,” “overture,” “concerto,” and “symphony,” for example, replaced Korean titles, which he had used in earlier periods. For example, during this period, he wrote five *Etüdes für Flöte* (1974), *Muakfürvoll Orchester* (1978), and *Violine Konzert NR. 1* (1981).

Since Yun’s experience of political abduction and imprisonment, he had begun to consider humanism in his works.<sup>9</sup> His symphonic poem, *Exemplum in memoriam Kwangju* was based on a real event, in which a large crowd of people poured into the streets on May 18, 1980 in Kwangju, South Korea, to fight for democracy against military authorities. It was written to express his lamentation and mourning of this tragedy, in which many citizens were killed or hurt because of the military’s reaction. The Köln Radio Broadcasting Symphony Orchestra premiered this piece on May 8, 1981.

In the last third of his European period, Yun received an honorary doctoral degree from Tübingen University in West Germany in 1985. During this time, he wrote five symphonies – one per year from 1983-1987. His Symphony No. 5 was performed at the ceremony for the celebration of Berlin’s 750<sup>th</sup> birthday. Yun also received the Grand Cross for Distinguished Service of the German Order of Merit from the German president Richard von Weizäcker in 1987. He was awarded a medal from the Hamburg Academy in 1992, and from the Goethe Institute in 1994. He was selected as one of the

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<sup>9</sup> Sung Man Choi, and Eun Mi Hong, compiled and translated. *한길문학예술총서* (Collection of Hangil Books on Art and Literature) vol. 4, *윤이상의 음악세계* (Isang Yun’s World of Music) (Seoul: Hangilsa, 1991), 49.

Five Living Great Composers in Europe in Munich, 1992, and one of the 30 Important Composers of the Twentieth Century by German Saarbrücken Broadcast in May 1995.<sup>10</sup>

Yun began to act on his desire to re-unify South and North Korea. Although he had problems visiting North Korea, he had continued to go there, and established the Research Institute of Music of Isang Yun and the Isang Yun music festival in Pyoung-Yang, North Korea, in 1982. He tried to promote the unification of South and North Korea through concerts, the first of which was held in Pyoung-Yang in October of 1990. However, his music had not been performed in South Korea since the East Berlin Event because of political issues. Finally, in 1994, several of Yun's operas, chamber works, and symphonies were performed at a ceremony for the celebration of his 77<sup>th</sup> birthday at the Isang Yun Music Festival in Seoul, Kwangju, and Pusan. Unfortunately he was unable to return to South Korea because of political issues: the South Korean government demanded an official apology for his past actions, which he refused to give.

Yun stated:

My actions were non-political. Honor and conscience are more important than money or authority for artists. They are asking me to abandon these things to come back to my homeland. I cannot accept that indignity.<sup>11</sup>

Yun died the following year on November 3, 1995, in Berlin.

Yun's music is now much more widely performed and studied in South Korea, and has continued to gain popularity in Europe and North Korea. In 2000, the Tongyeong Contemporary Music Festival was held in order to commemorate him. The

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<sup>10</sup> Chul-Hwa Kim, "The Musical Ideology and Style of Isang Yun, as Reflected in His Concerto for Violincello and Orchestra" (DMA. diss., University of Illinois, Urbana Champaign, 1997), 3.

<sup>11</sup> *Auditorium: The Monthly Music and Performing Art Magazine*. (A Separated Special Supplementary Book. Nov. 1995), 135.



Isang Yun International Composition Prize and Gyeongam International Music Competition are now held in South Korea.

## CHAPTER 3

### KOREAN INFLUENCES IN *KONTRASTE*

#### Korean Instruments

In *Konraste*, Yun uses a Western instrument as a vehicle for imitating the sounds of Korean instruments. He imitates the sounds of three Korean instruments in particular: *Kayakem*, *Hae-Kem*, and *Pak*.<sup>12</sup>

King Kasil developed the *Kayakem* around the 6th century in the Gaya confederacy. Ruk Wu, a musician in the Silla Dynasty (BC 57- AD 935), improved the *Kayakem*. The *Kayakem* is a zither with twelve moveable bridges and a tied knot at the bottom. *Kayakem* players pluck, pull, tap, or snap the strings with the right hand while twisting and pressing the strings with the left hand to produce glissando and vibrato effects. The sound of the *Kayakem* is similar to the various pizzicato techniques of Western stringed instruments.

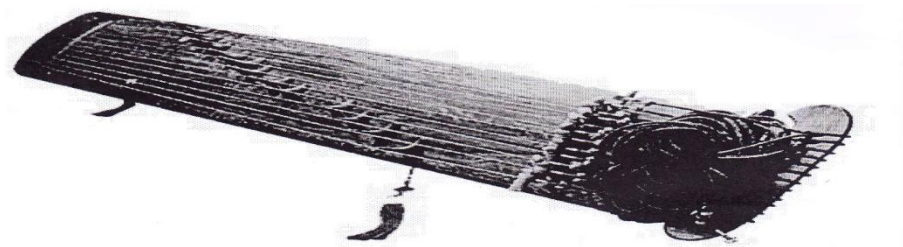


Figure 3.1 *Kayakem*

*Hae-Kem*, which has two strings made of silk tuned a fifth apart and no fingerboard, is a bowed chordophone (or spike fiddle), which is played vertically, on the left knee of the performer, with a bow. It has a rod-like neck and a hollow wooden sound

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<sup>12</sup> The source for the information given below is Tael Ryong Son, *한국전통악기* (The Korean Traditional Instruments) (Daegu: Yeungnam Univeristy, 2003).

box. In *Kontraste*, Yun's use of the glissando marking expresses the sound of *Hae-Kem*.

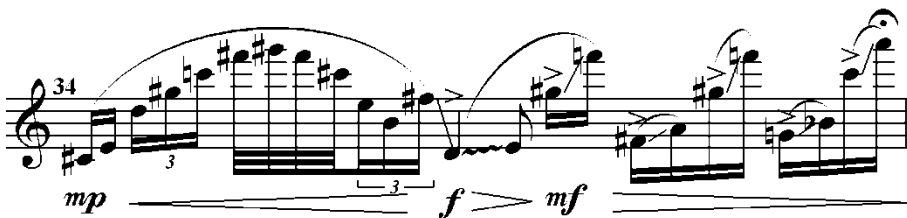


Figure 3.2 *Hae-Kem*

Example 3.1 *Hae-Kem, Kontraste I*, m. 31



Example 3.2 *Hae-Kem, Kontraste II*, m. 34



The *Pak* is a type of percussion instrument; it is a cluster of six wooden slats, which are used to signal the beginning and end of a piece in court music. The *Pak* player plays a role similar to a conductor and director in Western music.

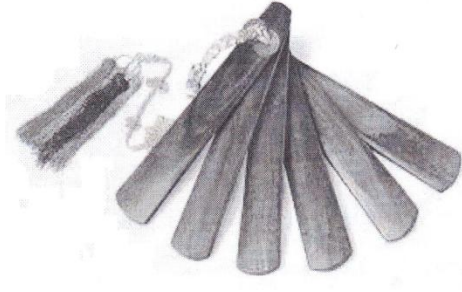


Figure 3.3 *Pak*

In order to understand these Korean instruments better, they were demonstrated in recordings in the lecture recital. The selected parts of Yun's *Kontraste* that imitate the sounds of these instruments were also demonstrated on the violin.

### *Nonghyun*

Embellishments in Korean music are essential.<sup>13</sup> In Western music, embellishments like trills, vibrato, or grace notes do not always play central roles in melodic, harmonic, or rhythmic development; instead, they are used as ornaments to make the music more appealing. In traditional Korean music, however, embellishments play central and indispensable roles.

In Korean music, the string ornamentation technique called *Nonghyun* (농현) is exclusively executed with the left hand. In Korean, “Nong” means playing or amusing oneself, and “Hyun” means a string. The general ornamentation techniques of *Nonghyun* are divided into four sub-categories: *Yosung* (요성), *Chusung* (추성), *Toesung* (퇴성), and *Jeonsung* (전성). *Yosung* is similar to Western vibrato on a long note. *Chusung* is a slide from a low note to a high note. *Toesung*, the opposite of

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<sup>13</sup> Shin Hyang Yun, *윤이상 경계선상의 음악 (Isang Yun's Music at the Boundary)* (Seoul: Hangilsa, 2005), 90.

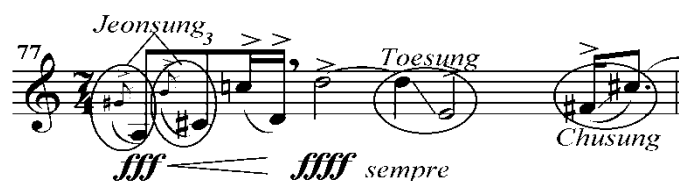
*Chusung*, is a slide from a high note to a low one. *Jeonsung*, which is a short vibrato and a diminution of *Yosung*, occurs on shorter notes. Yun uses these four techniques in his music. He simulates pervasive sound effects of *Nonghyun* in his works through the use of vibrato, trill, glissando, and grace notes.

Yun adapts traditional Korean performing techniques to the violin in *Kontraste*. He imitates *Yosung* through vibrato or trills on long notes. *Chusung* occurs with ascending glissandi, either alone or immediately following a pizzicato. *Toesung* occurs in descending glissandi, also either alone or immediately after a pizzicato. *Jeonsung* is represented by short grace notes (usually either one or two) and trills on short notes (see Examples 3.3-4).

Example 3.3 *Yosung*, *Kontraste* II, m. 2



Example 3.4 *Jeonsung*, *Toesung*, and *Chusung* order, *Kontraste* I, m. 77



These four techniques of *Nonghyun* are often combined in Korean traditional music, creating its characteristic sound. Yun uses these techniques widely in *Kontraste*.

It must be noted that the vibrato of Korean traditional music and Western music are not identical.<sup>14</sup> For example, the width of vibration on a single note in Korean

<sup>14</sup> Soo-Ja Lee, 176.

traditional music is normally much wider than in Western music. In Western performance practice, vibrato centers on a specific pitch, while on Korean instruments, performers' vibrato fluctuates more widely up and down.<sup>15</sup>

## Taoism

Traditional Korean music is influenced by the philosophical and spiritual traditions of Taoism, which is a Chinese philosophy. Laozi (604-531 BC) is regarded as the founder of Taoism. Taoism comes from the word *Tao*, which is usually translated as “way” or “path,” and refers to “a way to follow, a way of truth, and a principle.”<sup>16</sup> According to Jeoungmee Kim, Laozi’s basic notion was that “Things in the world come from being. And being comes from nonbeing. Being and nonbeing are important equally, so these opposites are to be harmonized.”<sup>17</sup>

The second Taoist, Chuang Tzu, further developed Taoism in the fourth century BC. His principle was that universal and human natures must be harmonized. In the theory of ancient Asian music, sound comes from the universe, so composed music receives its sound from the universe. The book of *Akhakgwebum* (악학궤범), which is a musical treatise of the Yi dynasty in Korea (1493 CE), says of Korean traditional music: “Music comes from heaven and it becomes a part of human life. Then, human beings

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<sup>15</sup> Injung Song, “In-Depth Study of Isang Yun’s Glissees Pour Violoncello Seul” (DMA diss., Boston University, 2008), 29.

<sup>16</sup> Sukkyoung Yoon, “A Study of Isang Yun and His Works” (DMA diss., Northwestern University, 2005), 19.

<sup>17</sup> Jeoungmee Kim, “Musical Syncretism in Isang Yun’s Gasa,” in *Locating East Asia in Western Art music*, ed. Yayoi Uno Everett, Frederick LauEverett (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 2004), 183.

get music from the nature.”<sup>18</sup> Isang Yun’s works are also influenced by Taoism. Yun uses the philosophy of Taoism as a significant component of his compositional style.

### *Yin-Yang Theory*

*Yin-Yang* theory, a derivative of Taoist philosophy, is a concept based on the pairing of opposites in the universe, as in male/female, moon/sun, dark/bright, and water/fire. In Yun’s work, *Yin* is expressed through piano dynamics, no vibrato, lower pitches, decrescendos, unembellished sustained notes, and dissonance. In contrast, forte dynamics, vibrato, higher pitch groups, crescendos, ornamentation, and consonance represent *Yang*. Yun uses quiescence to represent *Yin* and movement as *Yang* in *Kontraste*.<sup>19</sup> His works often contain a kind of harmony between the two contrasting ideas of *Yin* and *Yang*, often in the same passage. According to Yun, “The two elements [of *Yin* and *Yang*] should be harmonized in my music; they depend and support each other while they are moving together.”<sup>20</sup>

### *Jeong-Jung-Dong*

Another principle of Taoism is *Jeong-Jung-Dong*. The main idea of *Jeong-Jung-Dong* is that objects are moving, but not moving at the same time; for example, the stars in the night sky move in rotation, but they are not moving to people who look at the sky.<sup>21</sup> This principle had a big effect on Yun’s compositions, so he applied the *Hauptton*

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<sup>18</sup> Jae-Heung Lee. “A Study of Hyangak’s Musical Words in Akhagwebum” (master’s thesis, University of Suwon, 1996), 9-11.

<sup>19</sup> Walter-Wolfgang Sparrer, notes to Isang Yun, *Kontraste: Two Pieces for Violin Solo* (2007). Translated by Susan Marie Praeder. Internationale Isang Yun Gesellschaft E.V. CD IYG 007.

<sup>20</sup> Sung Man Choi, and Eun Mi Hong, 153.

<sup>21</sup> Ji Sun Choi, “The Merging of Korean Traditional Music and Western Instrumentation as Exemplified in Four Chamber Works for Piano Composed by Isang Yun” (DMA diss., University of Miami, 2007), 33.

technique to interpret this concept in his music. In an interview in *Japanese Musical Journal Art*, he said:

There are plenty of constant moving notes in my music. If you look at them closely, like with a microscope, all of them are moving but if you take a wide view you can see a flow. In further distant view, you can see everything is in standstill. This is something in common with the truth in oriental philosophy of cessation is moving and moving is cessation.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Junghyun Kim, "Isagn Yun's Duo for Viola and Piano: A Synthesis of Eastern Music Concepts with Western Music Techniques" (DMA diss., University of Arizona, 2007), 32.



## CHAPTER 4

### YUN'S COMPOSITIONAL CHARACTERISTICS

#### *Hauptton and Umspielung*

Yun adapts *Hauptton* technique as a way to illustrate the principle of *Jeong-Jung-Dong* in his compositions; he accomplishes this through combining a sustained single note with a moving ornament group. He also adapts the concept of a single note that is characteristic of Korean traditional music to a melodic structure. The concept of a single note in Korean and Western music is different; a single note in Western music does not have much meaning until it is grouped with other notes of different pitches and lengths. However, a single note in Korean traditional music has its own meaning, even without being grouped with other notes.<sup>23</sup> Yun applies the *Hauptton* technique with this idea of the single note and uses it in *Kontraste I* and *Kontraste II*, as examples 4.1-2 illustrate. Example 4.1 *Hauptton, Kontraste I*, mm. 1-8.



Example 4.2 *Hauptton, Kontraste II, first line*



Isang Yun also applies the concept of *Umspielung*, or “playing around” in German, which means that the single note is decorated with various ornamentations such as appoggiaturas, tremolos, trills, grace notes, glissandi, and vibrato. Yun’s music

<sup>23</sup> Shin Hyang Yun, *윤이상 경계선상의 음악 (Isang Yun's Music at the Boundary)* (Seoul: Hangilsa, 2005), 85.

often consists of a single tone (*Hauptton*) and ornamentations (*Umspielung*). The concept of *Umspielung* relates to the four types of *Nonghyun* technique (*Yosung*, *Chusung*, *Toesung*, and *Jeonsung*), which Yun notates in Western style. Examples 4.3-6 show how Yun's *Umspielung* here contains two types of *Nonghyun*: *Yosung* (vibrato), *Chusung* (ascending glissandi), *Toesung* (descending glissandi) and *Jeonsung* (grace notes).

Example 4.3 *Umspielung*, *Kontraste I*, mm. 1-8

Example 4.4 *Umspielung*, *Kontraste I*, mm. 22-23

Example 4.5 *Umspielung*, *Kontraste II*, the first line of page 7

Example 4.6 *Umspielung, Kontraste II*, mm. 5-8

The musical score for Example 4.6, *Umspielung, Kontraste II*, measures 5-8, is presented on a single staff. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4. The score is divided into four measures, each with a circled measure number (5, 6, 7, 8) above it. The first measure (5) begins with a dynamic marking of *mf* and is labeled *Toesung* below. The second measure (6) is labeled *Chusung* above and contains dynamic markings *p* and *mp* with a crescendo hairpin. The third measure (7) is labeled *Jeonsung* below and contains dynamic markings *p* and *mp* with a decrescendo hairpin. The fourth measure (8) is labeled *Chusung* above and contains dynamic markings *mp* and *pp* with a decrescendo hairpin. The notation includes various note values, rests, and slurs.

Basically, Yun subsumes the four types of *Nonghyun* under his own concept of *Umspielung*.

## CHAPTER 5

### ANALYSIS OF *KONTRASTE: ZWEI STÜCKE FÜR VIOLINE SOLO*

#### General Information

*Kontraste: Zwei Stücke für Violine Solo* (Contrast: Two Pieces for Violin Solo) was composed in 1987, and first played by the violinist Winfried Rüssmann on April 10, 1987, in Opera Stabile in Hamburg, Germany. According to Walter-Wolfgang Sparrer, two years before Yun started to compose the piece, he stated that an absolute contrast like the opposition between black and white does not exist in his music; rather, he used the idea of Taoism that pitch-darkness would always be combined with some light in his music.<sup>24</sup> With this idea in mind, Yun composed using contrasting elements in dynamics, rhythms, as well as violin techniques in the piece.

Since 1970, Yun has used Western tempo markings in his music. In *Kontraste*, he uses 6/4 (quarter note = 52) in peaceful and calm parts, like the slow movement, and 6/4 (quarter note = 60-68) in the more flowing and moving sections. Even though he uses tempo markings in the piece, he recommends that players should follow the musical gesture by emphasizing the important note among ten, twelve, or more notes rather than playing note by note, strictly in tempo. In fact, if performers take the tempo marking seriously, the fast passages are impossible to play in time.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Walter-Wolfgang Sparrer, .

<sup>25</sup> Eunmi, Hong, “윤이상, 또 하나의 르네상스 (Isang Yun, Another Renaissance),” in *Isang Yun's Musical World and the East-Asian Culture*, ed. The Musicological Society of Korea and The Isang Yun Peace Foundation (Seoul: Yesol Press, 2006), 95-96.

## Kontraste I

The first *Kontraste* consists of four parts, which are divided by fermatas. The distinctive feature of the first *Kontraste* is its use of left and right hand pizzicato. It covers a wide pitch range, from G3 to E7.

The first part of *Kontraste*, which begins with pizzicato in 6/4 (quarter note = 52), consists of two parts. The first section is from the beginning to m. 15, and the second section is in mm. 16-23. The beginning of the piece is undoubtedly imitating sound of *Kayakem*. One of the various pizzicato techniques a violinist should use is similar to so-called Bartok Pizzicato.<sup>26</sup> The violinist should utilize every pizzicato technique in their arsenal, from using the thumb or the first and second, or several fingers of the right hand, to the left hand pizzicato. The various ways of producing pizzicato include playing closer to the bridge, very far into the fingerboard, using more vertical plucking movement, or sometimes more horizontal movement, as if skimming over the string.

In m.10, the ascending glissandi between the sixteenth and dotted-eight notes represent *Chusung*, as shown in example 5.1. Yun uses grace notes (*Jeonsung*) and ascending glissandi (*Chusung*) together in m. 13.

Example 5.1 *Kontraste* I, mm. 9-15

The image shows a musical score for two staves of music, measures 9 through 15. The top staff begins at measure 9 with a whole rest, followed by a quarter note in measure 10. Measures 10, 11, and 12 contain sixteenth-note patterns with dynamic markings *f*, *ff*, *fff*, *ffff*, *p*, *pp*, *mf*, *p*, *f*, *ff*, and *p*. Above measure 10 is the instruction "Chusung" with a slur over the notes. The bottom staff starts at measure 13 with a quarter note, followed by sixteenth-note patterns in measures 14 and 15. Dynamic markings *f*, *ff*, *fff*, *ffff*, *p*, *fff*, *p*, *fff*, and *ffff* are present. Above measure 13 are the instructions "Jeonsung" and "Chusung" with slurs over the notes.

<sup>26</sup> Bartok pizzicato is played by firmly pinching the strings and pulling vertically up.

Yun uses contrasting elements simultaneously in *Kontraste*. For example, the Gs on the sixth beat of m. 14 and the second beat of m. 15 represent *Yin* while the sixteenth notes with dotted eighth notes between D and E-flat or D and E-natural with glissando in m. 15 represent *Yang*. The piano dynamic on these G quarter notes is a further representation of *Yin*, while the fortissimo on the sixteenths and dotted eighths of the same measures represents *Yang*. The second section finishes in a manner similar to the first, with ascending glissandi in m. 23 (see Ex. 5.2).

Example 5.2 *Kontraste* I, m. 23



In contrast to the first section, the third section (mm. 24-50) begins with a C# in the higher octave and flows with rhythmic variations. The opening of the first section can be considered *Yin*, while the opening of the third section represents *Yang*, as shown in m. 24 of Example 5.3.

Example 5.3 *Kontraste* I, m. 24-25



Yun used various ornamentations such as trills, grace notes, and glissandi to represent *Nonghyun* in the third section. Measure 29 includes the use of *Chusung* (ascending glissandi), and *Yosung* occurs in the grace notes and trills in m. 30. *Yosung* and *Chusung* (a trill with an ascending glissando) occur in m. 31. *Jeonsung* (multiple

trills), *Chusung* (ascending glissandi), and *Toesung* (descending glissandi) appear in m. 49 (Ex. 5.5). In mm. 29-31 (Ex. 5.4), Yun uses *Yin-Yang* to illustrate rhythmic tension and release. *Yang* occurs between the second and fourth beats of m. 29, followed by *Yin* on the fifth beat of m. 29, and the return of *Yang* on the fourth beat in m. 31. Like the first and second sections, this one ends with *Chusung*. However, Yun uses a *fermata lunga* only in the ending of the third section to indicate higher tension. (Ex 5.5).

For a violinist not familiar with original sound of *Hae-Kem*, it is important to know how the imitation of the Korean instrument is best achieved. The important pitch between the two written notes is only the first one. The glissando leads toward the second notated pitch, but reaching the latter at the end of the glissando is not important, except if there is a fermata on the second pitch. Thus, glissando notates an approximate interval from bottom note, which is accentuated. (See example 5.4-5).

Example 5.4 *Kontraste I*, mm. 29-31

Example 5.5 *Kontraste I*, mm. 49-50

In the last section of *Kontraste I*, Yun provides signs and musical description in the score for the violinist. For example, the violinist should continue to play on the G-string in mm. 51-55 because Yun indicates “G-Saite bevorzugen” (G-string preferred) (Ex. 5.6).

Example 5.6 *Kontraste I*, mm. 51-55

He also uses the signs: ‘ $\cap$ ’ (1/4 *Ton Erhöhung*), which means raised quartertone as well as ‘ $\cup$ ’ (1/4 *Ton Erniedrigung*), which means lower note of mm. 65-66 (Ex. 5.7).

Another sign is that Yun uses ‘ $\rightarrow$ ’. It appears in m. 71. Yun also indicates the meaning of the sign on the score (*Terz-Triller mittragen*) to carry the trill through (the interval of) a third (Ex. 5.8). Moreover, he uses the marking *ricochet* with glissando in m. 76 (Ex. 5.9). The ending of last section finishes with pizzicato in a half note (Ex. 5.10).



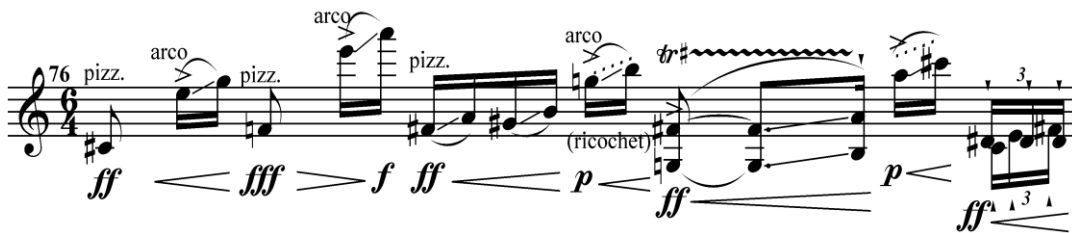
Example 5.7 *Kontraste I*, mm. 65-66



Example 5.8 *Kontraste I*, m. 71



Example 5.9 *Kontraste I*, m. 76



Example 5.10 *Pak*, *Kontraste I*, mm. 87-88.



### *Kontraste II*

The second *Kontraste*, like the first, contains four parts, which are divided by double bars. Like *Kontraste I*, it also covers a wide register, from G3 to E7. *Kontraste II* opens with the bow in *senza misura* (“unmeasured”) with the indications *oder noch schneller dagegen etwas länger als Notenwert*, or “even faster or a little longer than the actual note value” in English. The *senza misura* reappears in the third section. Both

sections have only one measure, but consist of sixteenth and thirty-second notes with trills. It is impossible to play these sections precisely in time according to Yun's tempo marking. Therefore, the violinist should create phrases to illustrate the musical gesture rather than playing note by note.<sup>27</sup> These sections are the most flowing parts in either *Kontraste I* on *II*.

The openings of each movement in *Kontraste* are different. The first movement begins with forte dynamics, representing *Yang*. However, the second movement begins with piano dynamics, indicating *Yin*. The second movement also starts with the use of various ornamentations without bar lines, so it is more flowing than the first movement. Moreover, the first movement illustrates the concept of opposition in *Yin-Yang* theory, while the second movement illustrates the continuous changes with trills, glissandi, and grace notes (*Umspielung*) on the main note (See Ex. 4.3 and 4.5).

The second section begins with *con sordino* in 6/4 (quarter note = 60) and also illustrates *Yin-Yang* theory. For example, the forte dynamic (*Yang*) appears in m. 13-14, followed by *p*, *pp*, and *ppp* with harmonics (*Yin*) in mm. 14-17 (Ex. 5.11).

Example 5.11 *Kontraste II*, mm. 13-17

The last section of *Kontraste II* is divided into two parts: tempo 6/4 and *senza misura*. In mm. 43-44, the melody occurs with an unusual octave leap as shown in example 5.12. In the last section, *senza misura*, double-stops with intervals ranging

<sup>27</sup> Eunmi Hong., 11-12.

from major thirds to augmented elevenths appear, making a more abundant, rich sound (Ex. 5.13).

Example 5.12 *Kontraste II*, mm. 43-44

Example 5.13 *Kontraste II*, 6-7 lines of page 10

The dynamics of each of the endings of *Kontraste II*'s four sections gradually increase from *pp*-*p*-*f*-*ff*. Like *Kontraste I*, *Kontraste II* ends with a pizzicato half note chord, which is reminiscent of the *Pak*.

Example 5.14 *Pak*, *Kontraste II*, the last three notes

## CHAPTER 6

### CONCLUSION

In his *Kontraste: Zwei Stücke für Violine Solo*, Isang Yun expresses features of Korean traditional music inspired by Taoism. He translates qualities of the Korean traditional instruments *Kayakem*, *Hae-Kem*, and *Pak*, as well as the ornamentation techniques of *Nonghyun*, to the violin. By reinterpreting these traditional Korean musical characteristics through a Western musical framework, Yun demonstrates a new aesthetic, and develops his own musical language. The analysis of the piece shows Yun's use of *Hauptton*, *Umspielung*, and *Jeong-Jung-Dong* by providing musical examples of performance techniques based on Korean traditional music.

Yun entitles the piece "Kontraste," related to the Taoist-inspired concept of contrast rather than Western concept. The concept ultimately illustrates the balance and harmony of the contrasted elements throughout the piece. I think this piece is also analogous to the division of South and North Korea. *Kontraste I* and *Kontraste II* could represent South and North Korea and their ideological conflicts. Yun desired to see the reunification of his homeland ever since the Korean Peninsula endured the Korean War. Through the simultaneous use of opposite concepts (*Yin-Yang*) and the integration of musical figures from Korean tradition music and Western music, Yun may have been expressing his desire for Korean reunification in *Kontraste*.

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