GEONYONG LEE’S VIOLIN WORKS *RHAPSODY FOR VIOLIN AND PIANO*
AND *HEOTEN GARAK*: A STUDY OF COMPOSITIONAL STYLE
AND STYLISTIC INFLUENCES

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The purpose of this study is to research the music of Geonyong Lee (이건용), one of the most recognized active Korean composers, while determining Lee’s intent to compose with influences from both Western and traditional Korean music. This paper analyses Lee’s violin works *Rhapsody for Piano and Violin* and *Heoten Garak*, and explains the cultural and historical significance surrounding both works in terms of traditional Korean music. Lee asserts that his primary influence *Rhapsody for Piano and Violin* was Nongac (농악), a traditional form of Korean farming music. Similarly, *Heoten Garak* displays a distinct influence of traditional Korean music genres, *Heoten Garak* and *Pansori*. By analyzing Geonyong Lee’s compositional style and approach to the violin, one learns how his musical philosophies combine Western and traditional Korean music practices into a unique compositional approach. The study concludes by summarizing not only Western and traditional Korean style as evident in his music, but also the conceptual approach by which the composer attempts to bring a unique combination of these influences to his audience.
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I would like to thank my parents for their endless support and encouragement. Like most parents, they are full of love and always strive to do their best; these are lessons I will always carry with me. I would like to thank Professor Philip Lewis whose big heart and guidance has been like a mountain for me over the past years at the University of North Texas. Maestro Clay Coutriaux taught me about the musical world as well as conducting and orchestral works. It was his guidance that opened my eyes to other instruments and the orchestra. Doctor Justin Lavacek is an outstanding editor whose brilliant knowledge helped me realize this dissertation. And I thank God for the opportunity to meet these amazing people in my life.
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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

Geonyong Lee is one of the most prolific and recognized active Korean composers. In Korea, he has made a reputation not only as a leading composer of sacred choral works, but also for his work with traditional Korean music.¹ In his academic career, he taught at two of the most prestigious music schools in Korea: Seoul National University (서울대) and Korea National University of Arts (한국예술종합학교). After his retirement from teaching, he served (2012-17) as the head of Seoul Metropolitan Opera (서울오페라단). He remains a prolific composer, known for his incorporation of both Western and traditional Korean musical aesthetics.

An analysis of his compositions, writings, and interviews will show how Geonyong Lee deals with his desire to combine Western music with traditional Korean music into a unique compositional synthesis. Evidence of this compositional approach will be supported with examples from two of his works, *Rhapsody for Piano and Violin* and *Heoten Garak*. Analyzing these two works will display their connection to traditional Korean musical styles without relying on traditional Korean instrumentation. Rather, this analysis will show how the composer incorporates both Western and traditional Korean musical choices in terms of rhythm, tonality, and structural features. Moreover, the study will highlight how Lee often translates the conceptual elements of one musical tradition through the compositional techniques of the other tradition. Rather than directly quoting any one specific passage or instrumental technique indicative of the traditional style, he considers both respective musical sensibilities in order to determine ways to reinterpret each tradition from the perspective of the other. Although

¹ A number of Lee’s works for traditional Korean instruments are part of the required repertory for entrance to numerous music schools in Korea. For example, the Gayageum (가야금) work *Han-O-Back-Nyun* (한오백년) and the Haeguem (해금) work *Haegum Garak III* (해금가락 III) are required pieces for the DMA audition repertoire at Ewha Womans University as of 2017.
Geonyong Lee is one of the most prominent living Korean composers, only two of his most important works have been studied in English language dissertations. While previous research projects explored Lee’s choral and clarinet works respectively, this thesis will focus on two of his works incorporating the violin, as well as the characteristics and influences surrounding his third and fourth compositional periods. The author’s hope is that this study will offer unique insight into a compositional style that blends Western and non-Western musical techniques. Specifically, this research will cover Lee’s approach to translating the conceptual principles of traditional Korean musical performance to the versatility of the violin, as opposed to representing a specific traditional Korean instrument with a Western equivalent. Moreover, continued research into the music of Geonyong Lee will bring about greater knowledge of these important works and allow them to be performed outside of Korea, broadening the possibilities of the violin repertoire.

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Haisun Lee,” A Study of a Modern Clarinet Work, Song in the Dust I for Solo Clarinet by Geonyoung Lee: Focused on the Comparison with Sangryungsan (Korean Traditional Solo Piri Piece) through Musical Style and Performance Practice” (DMA diss., University of Cincinnati, 2004).
CHAPTER 2
GEONYOUNG LEE

2.1. Geonyong Lee: Life, Education and Compositional Periods

Geonyong Lee was born in on September 30, 1947, in Pyeong-an-nam-do, which is a part of North Korea. He was born the fourth child of a pastor. His father was an amateur musician, and Lee grew up with musical environment. Due to the political climate, his family moved to South Korea where Lee spent the majority of his formative years. His musical experience began with compositions and oboe performance in grade school, continuing with composition studies in the Seoul High School of Music and Arts, Seoul National University, and Frankfurter Musikhochschule in Germany.³

Geonyong Lee’s career as a composer began with his first compositional period in the 1970s. It is important to note that as of this study, Lee’s body of work is typically divided into four periods.⁴ This first period, often referred to as his period of ‘style-searching,’ spans his education at Seoul National University and Frankfurter Musikhochschule in Germany. Prior to his studies in Germany, his music mainly focused on traditional Korean music or vocal works. While in Germany, Lee was heavily influenced by György Ligeti and Isang Yun, and tried to compose music with delicate textures indicative of Ligeti.

In the earlier half of the 1980s, Lee began his second compositional period categorized by Korean-specific musical style. After his return to Korea, Lee noted the tense political situation in Korea and the distinct lack of cultural identity in Korea’s Western-dominated music. Lee

focused on choral compositions and began to incorporate traditional Korean musical elements with the techniques of his previous period to develop his own musical language. In 1981, Lee and five young Korean composers founded the Third Generation of Composers Association (제 3세대 작곡 동인), as a direct response to the significant Western influence on Korean music.

After 1990, Lee began what many refer to as his “confronting” period. Whereas most compositional periods are distinguished by stylistic changes, Lee is unique in that the primary motivating factor for his third and fourth periods was his approach to the public. He wanted to not only compose, but to better communicate with his audience. One of the distinct characteristics of this period is the beginning of Lee’s open discourse with his audience and critics. In an effort to open his music to a wider audience, Lee began giving public talks and interviews regarding his compositions. Compositionally, Lee continued Western and Korean traditional music and composed a large number of choral works, determining such works to be more accessible to a wider audience. While he composed a great number of choral works during this period, he also composed *Rhapsody for Piano and Violin* which will be explored in this study.

After Lee stayed the Philippines for one year in 1990, he began contemplating the unique core of Korean emotion, (정서의 그루터기) which refers to the personal zeitgeist of the Korean people.\(^5\) In wanting to describe this emotional concept, he made distinct compositional changes that once again deal with the dichotomy of Western and Eastern tradition. While Lee acknowledged the significance of great Western compositions, he also realized that larger complex works may alienate new audiences. As opposed to the large-scale compositions of his previous periods, Lee focused on small-scale pieces that he believed would not isolate audiences

\(^5\) Ibid.
from his new music. It is during this period, that he composed *Hoeten Garak*, which will be explored further in this study.

Ultimately, Geonyong Lee’s compositional evolution is linked to two key concepts: the relationship between Western and traditional Korea music, and his evolving relationship with his audience. While this study will focus on the use of the two distinct musical traditions in his work, it is important to consider Lee’s desire to better communicate with his audience in the works of his later periods.

2.2. Geonyong Lee: His Philosophies and Aesthetic Views

Lee is well known not only for his compositions, but his career in music academia. His numerous writings on the subject of music composition offer insight into his own philosophy of arts, in particular his understanding of traditional Korean Music. As an active writer, Lee wrote many books such as *Logic and Ethics in Korean Music* (한국음악의 논리와 윤리), *The Faces Looking at My Music* (나의 음악을 지켜보는 얼굴), and *Theory of Ethnic Music* (민족음악론). Writings such as these reveal Lee’s distinctive characteristics: Lee fixates on ways to combine Western and Korean music, and he is open to sharing his ideas and communicating with his audience. Lee’s dilemma about combining Western and Korean music began while the composer studied in Germany, where he first truly wondered about how he could compose Western music as a Korean. His thoughts on this topic are addressed in his book *Korean Music’s Logic and Ethics*. This particular book opens with the sentence “What is Korean music?” and further explorers his thoughts on translating Korean music to a Western format. In addition to his writings on music, Geonyong Lee openly welcomed discourse to further explore the nature of his music with his audience.

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audience. Believing that communication between the composer and the audience is important, Lee often holds meetings to the public to explain his musical works. For example, on October 17th, 1998, a critic was invited to an open talk with the composer at his concert and the two discussed his recent works including *Rhapsody for Piano and Violin.*

Lee continues to engage numerous interviews, and his writings range from essays intended for music lovers to texts and treatises for music students. Lee’s transparency with his audience suggests a willingness to help listeners better understand his musical goals; the composer has even said he considered the listener’s ears, even though he was not tied on that.

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8 Ibid.
CHAPTER 3
UNDERSTANDING THE SYNTHESIS OF WESTERN AND TRADITIONAL
KOREAN MUSIC IN Rhapsody for Piano and Violin

3.1. Rhapsody for Piano and Violin

Geonyong Lee’s violin work *Rhapsody for Piano and Violin* (피아노와 바이올린을 위한 랩소디) was commissioned in 1984 by violinist Nam Yun Kim (김남윤), who is a very influential violin teacher in Korea and colleague of Lee at the Korea National University of Arts. Lee said that when he composed *Rhapsody for Piano and Violin*, his primary stylistic influence was Nongac (농악), a traditional form of Korean farming music. This music is performed traditionally by rural villagers who play music and dance during their harvest season. Nongac is an oral tradition, and does not rely on written music. The performers play mostly percussion instruments, and thus the rhythmic patterns are the most important element of this style of music. *Rhapsody for Piano and Violin* changes rhythm frequently, which is a major feature of Nongac.

3.2. Performance History

*Rhapsody for Piano and Violin* was first premiered at Nam Yun Kim’s recital and was subsequently recorded by her and Choong Mo Kim (강충모), in the 1999 *Song in Dust* (저녁노래). In 2007, *Rhapsody for Piano and Violin* was premiered in the United States at

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9 Program notes from the premiere recital.
10 Faculty member of the Korean National University of Arts.
11 Full title is *Geon Yong Lee Chamber Music Album “Song in Dust”* (이건용 실내악곡집 저녁노래). SIM Record (이즘레코드) in 1999. The record company closed in 2006. http://m.lib.sookmyung.ac.kr/search/detail/CATTOT000000587238?mainLink=/search/tot&briefLink=/search/tot/result?q=%ED%94%BC%EC%95%84%EB%85%B8_A_st=FRNT_A_si=1_A_pn=3 (Korean document, translated by the Author).
Carnegie Hall in New York City, by Sung-Ju Lee (송주), a professor at the Korea National University of Arts, and music director of the Joy of String ensemble.¹²

3.3. Nongac: Traditional Korean Farming Music

As traditional Nongac heavily influences the piece, this chapter will also provide an introduction to this style of music. Nongac, also called Nongak, is derived from the Korean terms “nong” meaning farm and “ac” meaning music or joy.¹³ Thus it is a traditional Korean music played by rural farming communities. During a Nongac performance, performers drawn from the community play music and dance in celebration of their harvest season and their prosperity.

¹² http://www.euroarts.co.kr/english/prof/pro_sjl.htm
¹³ ([nɔŋak] [NONG-ahk] Korean: (농악), Chinese (農樂).
The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) picked Nongac for Korea’s 17th Intangible cultural heritage. The organization defined the style as follows:

Nongak is a popular performing art derived from communal rites and rustic entertainments. It has evolved into a representative performing art of the Republic of Korea, combining a percussion ensemble and sometimes wind instruments, parading, dancing, drama and acrobatic feats. Local Nongak performers clad in colourful costumes perform their music and dance during community events with various purposes, such as appeasing gods, chasing evil spirits, praying for a rich harvest in spring then celebrating it during autumn festivals and fund-raising for community projects. There are distinctive regional styles of Nongak, generally divided among five cultural centres. Within each area, differences exist from one village to another in band composition, performing style, rhythm and costumes. Dancing includes choreographic formations and streamer dances while actors wearing masks and peculiar outfits also perform funny skits. Acrobatics include dish spinning and miming antics by child dancers carried on the shoulders of adult performers. The public becomes familiar with Nongak through observation and participation in its performances, while community groups and educational institutions

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play an important role in teaching and transmitting the different components. Nongak helps to enhance solidarity and cooperation in the community and establishes a sense of shared identity among community members.\textsuperscript{15}

While Nongac is often more recognizably referred to as Pungmul (풍물) in the Western world,\textsuperscript{16} the term Nongac is more familiar for most Korean people, and Geonyong Lee prefers to use this term. As such, this study will use the word Nongac instead of Pungmul.


\textsuperscript{16} [pʰuː ɲmul] [POONG-muul] Korean: (풍물), Chinese: (風物).
CHAPTER 4
ANALYSIS OF RHAPSODY FOR PIANO AND VIOLIN

4.1. Aspects of Western and Traditional Korean Music – Overview

Beyond referencing the performance style of traditional music, *Rhapsody for Piano and Violin* has numerous features that reference both traditional Korean music and Western music with relation to rhythm, tonality, and structure. Of considerable note are the conceptual elements highly inspired by Nongac. This study will categorize each element with respect to cultural tradition. Examples of such distinctions are outlined in Table 1. Lee relies on a combination of these elements throughout the piece, and subsequently deals with the philosophical and aesthetic dilemmas that he often discusses when combining both Western and Korean compositional techniques.
Table 1: The Elements of Western, Traditional Korean, and Nongac music as related to the analysis of *Rhapsody for Piano and Violin*.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Western</th>
<th>Korean</th>
<th>Especially found in Nongac</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Time Signature</strong></td>
<td>- Reliance on time signature</td>
<td>- Does not have time signature</td>
<td>- No written score</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Written score</td>
<td>- Uses Jangdan (a written pattern of set rhythms, rhythmic modes)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rhythm</strong></td>
<td>- Relies on repetition of previous rhythm</td>
<td>- Relies on repetition of previous rhythm</td>
<td>- Relies on repetition of previous rhythm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Regular grouping more common</td>
<td>- Irregular grouping</td>
<td>- Simple repetition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Compound meter often found</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tonality</strong></td>
<td>- Triads often used</td>
<td>- Perfect fourth and fifth</td>
<td>- Typically meant for percussion instruments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Minor 2\textsuperscript{nd} often used</td>
<td>- Korean music does not incorporate triads, or minor 2\textsuperscript{nd} and minor 3\textsuperscript{rd} intervals</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Melodic Ornamentation</strong></td>
<td>- Ornamentation is often strictly notated in the score</td>
<td>- Predetermined ornamentations indicative of Nonghyun\textsuperscript{17}</td>
<td>- Rarely have melody, but is typically played by wind instrument in such cases</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Contour of the ornamentation is often promoted over strict intonation</td>
<td>- Contour of the ornamentation is often promoted over strict intonation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Form</strong></td>
<td>- Pieces are often divided into movements, further divided into sections</td>
<td>- Traditional Korean music works are divided into sections by Jangdan</td>
<td>- Similar use of Jangdan. Starts slowly but becomes faster</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.2. Aspects of Western Music

Beyond the obvious use of Western notation and time signature in a traditionally oral style of music, Lee distinctly uses chords, intervals, and musical structures that can be considered Western.

Traditional Korean music, exemplified by formal music used in courts and attributed to the more classically-trained of traditional Korean musicians, has a distinct lack of harmony or

\textsuperscript{17} Traditional Korean String technique. Similar to vibrato but intonation changes are more delicate and are varied for ornamentation.
chords between instrumental voices. With an almost universal use of unison tones and octaves, it
chords and harmony are almost completely absent in traditional Korea music.\textsuperscript{18} However,
\textit{Rhapsody for Piano and Violin} displays a number of harmonies based on thirds and triads in the
piano accompaniment. Lee uses these highly Western pitch collections with rhythms more
indicative of the percussive nature of Nongac.

Example 1. \textit{Rhapsody for Piano and Violin} mm. 41-48.

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{example1.png}
\end{figure}

The Allegro section is notable for using distinct major triads and evoking an arpeggio
pattern. These are some of the most distinct examples of Western harmonic structure in the

piece. As shown in Example 2 below, a pattern suggesting an arpeggio is used in the piano, while the violin plays major thirds.

Example 2. *Rhapsody for Piano and Violin* mm. 181-88.

Additionally, the piece’s interval system also begins with more influence from Western music than traditional Korean techniques (see Example 3 below). The slow introduction mostly relies on m2 intervals, which are not found in the tuning systems typically employed in traditional Korean music that typically uses an anhemitonic pentatonic scale.19

Aspects of Traditional Korean Music

Rhapsody for Piano and Violin distinctly incorporates traditional Korean musical aspects, specifically choices from Nongac: Ornamentation from Korean (농현) Chinese (弄絃) tradition, and odd and compound meter from Jangdan.

Traditional Korean music does not have time signatures, relying instead on the use of a system called Jangdan (장단). Jangdan is an organized system of repeating predetermined rhythmic patterns which are written and referenced for many works of traditional Korean music. This approach shares similarities with the rhythmic modes in early Western music. While Lee does not use any of the traditional Jangdan patterns, his later rhythmic patterns repeat in a manner reminiscent of Jangdan. These rhythmic patterns not only hint at a traditional Korean practice, but also emulate the fast energetic percussive qualities of Nongac. Example 4 is an example of Jangdan, which is translated to Western notation.
Example 4. Semachi Jangdan.

In contrast to the energy seen throughout the work, the slow introduction features a wide variety of ornamentations played typically in quick interjections before or after sustained tones. Example 3 above shows the sustained tones of the phrase are punctuated with fast stepwise motion after each sustained tone. From this perspective, the half step motion and aforementioned intervals are reminiscent of a distinct Korean approach that prioritizes the contour of the ornamentation over the intonation. This approach to slow melodic passages is a distinguishing feature of traditional Korean music, and Lee’s use of techniques more indicative of 20th century compositional theory becomes a means by which he illustrates the conceptual approach to Korean ornamentation.
Example 5A. Depictions of ornamentation in traditional Korean notation.\textsuperscript{20}

As seen in Example 5A above, the small cells that make up the grid each represent a beat and corresponding note. The long vertical columns to the right of each grid are marked with figures to denote the type of ornamentation. Example 5B shows how Example 5A is translated to Western notation.

\textsuperscript{20} Jong-In (Angela) Heo, “The Korean Transverse flute Taegŭm and Its Music Taegŭm Sanjo” (DMA. Diss, The Florida State University, 2002), 131.
As seen in Example 5A and Example 5B, the traditional form of notation relies on symbols that correspond to predetermined ornamentation techniques. This approach is similar to the predetermined rhythmic patterns found in Jangdan. Lee approximates the contour and rhythm of the ornamentations, but more importantly he reuses patterns or ornamentation in a similar manner to traditional Korean music. While the initial material is a new product of the composer, the organization and use of the material is a distinct reference to the compositional techniques of traditional Korean music.

At m. 30, the violin plays a melody which is similar to that found in the previous tempo de rubato section (see Example 6). The heavily ornamented passage suggests the Korean

\[\text{Example 5B. Traditional Sanjo piece, translated to Western notation.}^{21}\]
traditional string technique Nonghyun. Nonghyun is similar to the Western vibrato, but often produces a pitch with much wider variation that is capable of changing the intonation in a variety of predetermined patterns each represented by a corresponding symbol. This technique was a direct result of the design of many traditional Korean stringed instruments, which allow the performer to fluctuate the pressure applied to a depressed string further than is capable on a violin. Due to the limitations of the violin, the technique must ultimately be realized sonically through faster slurred passages or glissandi. This presents a unique opportunity for both composer and performer to use the violin’s versatility to recreate the intended sonic effect.


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22 Korean (농현), Chinese (弄絃).
4.4. Aspects of Traditional Korean Music that Evoke Nongac

Of the musical aspects that evoke traditional Korean music, three aspects distinctly suggest the traditions of Nongac: the use of increased tension, a “call and response” repetition, and irregular rhythm changes.

This quality of increased tension is often characterized by music that starts slowly with sustained tones and gradually increases both the tempo and rhythmic density to create the effect of increased tension and speed. This is most easily observed in the introduction. The long, sustained tones grow shorter over the course of the first 30 measures, with greater rhythmic complexity adding over time to create a sense of building density in the music.

While the concept of “call and response” technique is found in many musical traditions, it is important to note that this technique has an integral importance in traditional Nongac. In a
traditional Nongac performance, a lead musician plays a simple rhythmic pattern or motive, and the group repeats with similar percussion instruments. Lee takes a similar approach with the interplay between the violin and piano by focusing on distinct rhythmic patterns and the relative contour of arpeggiated passages (see Example 8 below).

Example 8. *Rhapsody for Piano and Violin* mm.75-78.

As traditional Nongac has no written score and the spontaneous musical changes are directed by a lead instrument, irregular rhythm is a prominent feature of Nongac (see Example 9A). Lee takes a similar approach to recreate the sensation by employing his own sudden rhythmic changes, moving abruptly between feelings of duple and triple meter. Example 9B shows the use of compound meter and frequent changes to the time signature. However, the pitch material is very triadic and suggests a synthesis of Eastern and Western principles.
Example 9A. Rhythm figures of traditional Nongac, transcribed to Western notation.\textsuperscript{23}

Example 9B. \textit{Rhapsody for Piano and Violin} mm. 129-134.

It is important to note that Geonyong Lee’s primary influence from traditional music was a distinct desire to express the mirthful mood typical in a performance of Nongac.\textsuperscript{24} Thus, rather than a rhythmic quotation of traditional Korean music, Lee took influence from the interplay of instruments indicative of the traditional performance practice of Nongac. However, while Lee did not directly quote specific traditional rhythmic patterns, the composer did focus on the nature of the rhythmic performance. In composing \textit{Rhapsody for Piano and Violin}, Lee incorporated irregular rhythms and often uses a lead player to introduce new patterns; these stylistic choices are based heavily on key performance elements indicative of Nongac.

The distinct compositional choices employed by Lee show that while the piece relies on Western structure and harmony, a number of stylistic features link the piece to traditional Korean performance practice. In particular, the composer’s use of rhythmic and ornamentation patterns bears a striking resemblance to the performance of traditional Korean music, further emphasized by the increasing speed and rhythmic density which is yet another feature of Nongac. From structural decisions to material inspired by the traditional source music, Lee was able to use both musical traditions in a way that is integral to the identity of the music, but also suggests both of the traditions that influence the work. This blend of influences not only illustrates the composer's desire to combine both musical traditions, but through his desire to express the mirthful mood typical in a performance of Nongac Lee is clearly keeping with the goal of communication that distinguishes his third period. In composing \textit{Rhapsody for Piano and Violin}, Lee uses both the cultural musical concepts of this traditional music (increased tension, frequent time signature changes, and “call and response” techniques) as well as the emotional context of this familiar tradition as a framing device to better connect with his audience.

\textsuperscript{24} Geonyong Lee, e-mail massage to author, February 20\textsuperscript{th}, 2017.
5.1. *Heoten Garak*

Geonyong Lee’s violin solo work *Heoten Garak* (허튼가락) was the commissioned work for the Seoul International Competition in 2012. *Heoten Garak*, meaning “scattered melody,” is named after a traditional Korean musical genre that features an improvisatory style similar to a toccata. The traditional Korean style called for performers to insert cadenza-like passages during the work, and improvise using the melodic lines provided. As the tradition of Korean music evolved, this specific performance practice grew consistently more structured until most modern performers play the genre as written in standardized scores.

Lee composed a number of works in the genre of *Heoten Garak* for both traditional Korean instruments as well as Western instruments, such as the piece *Overtone-Jo Heoten Garak* (배음조 허튼가락), which was composed for the traditional instrument called the Geomugo (거문고). Lee’s knowledge and skill with string instruments from both traditional Korean and Western practices is evident in his approach to *Heoten Garak* which uses the violin as opposed to a traditional Korean instrument.

5.2. Performance History and the Seoul International Competition

*Heoten Garak* (허تون가락) was commissioned for the semi-final round of the Seoul International Competition (서울국제콩쿨) in 2012. The Seoul International Music Competition was established by the Seoul Metropolitan Government and the Dong-A Ilbo, the national newspaper in Korea, with the goal of promoting cultural exchange among the nations through music while
supporting talented young musicians from all over the world. Prizes are awarded for the categories of piano, violin, and voice in a rotating sequence, and the competition remains one of Korea’s most prestigious international competition for these three instruments.

5.3. A Korean Operatic Tradition

Initially, the Heoten Garak was developed from the traditional Korean vocal genre known as Pansori.²⁵ Pansori is a narrative vocal performance similar to an opera. However, the style only features one vocalist (changja 창자) who both sings and also talks with rhythmic delivery similar to the German Singspiel or the technique of Sprechstammen. Gestures, acting, and other use of body language are common in the performance. A drummer (gosu 고수) provides the only accompaniment for the vocalist and may also speak in reaction to the singer.²⁷ Typical performances of a single Pansori piece can range from three hours to six.

Over time, experimentation from numerous musicians evolved the style of Pansori to other instruments, creating the genre Heoten Garak which in turn became known as Sanjo. Heoten Garak and Sanjo replace the solo vocalist with a solo instrument while maintaining the accompaniment of a single percussionist. Heoten Garak shows the instrument’s character, alongside the performer’s musical abilities.

²⁵ Also spelled p’ansori.
²⁶ Sori (소리).
²⁷ Chooimsae (추임새).
In 2003, UNESCO proclaimed the Pansori tradition to be a Masterpiece of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity.

Pansori is a genre of musical storytelling performed by a vocalist and a drummer. This popular tradition, characterized by expressive singing, stylized speech, a repertory of narratives and gesture, embraces both elite and folk culture. During performances lasting up to eight hours, a male or female singer, accompanied by a single barrel drum, improvises on texts that combine rural and erudite literary expressions. The term Pansori is derived from the Korean words pan, meaning “a place where many people gather”, and sori meaning “song”……. It remained an oral tradition among the common people until the late nineteenth century, by which time it acquired more sophisticated literary content and enjoyed considerable popularity among the urban elite….. Pansori singers undergo long and rigorous training to master the wide range of distinct vocal timbres and to memorize the complex repertories. Many virtuosos have developed personal interpretive styles and are renowned for their particular manner of performing specific episodes. Threatened by Korea’s rapid modernization, Pansori was designated a National Intangible Cultural Property in 1964. This measure spurred generous institutional support, which in turn fostered the revival of this tradition Although Pansori remains one of the most prominent genres among traditional stage arts, it has lost much of its original

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spontaneous character. Ironically, this recent evolution is a direct result of the preservation process itself, for improvisation is tending to be stifled by the increasing number of written texts. Indeed, few singers nowadays can successfully improvise, and contemporary audiences are less receptive to the impromptu creativity and language of traditional Pansori.\(^\text{29}\)

While the style is often referenced by the more commonly used term Sanjo, Lee chose to reference the more archaic term in this particular work. For the purpose of this study, the term Heoten Garak will be used as well.

Table 2. Elements of Pansori, and Heoten Garak.\(^\text{30}\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Elements</th>
<th>Pansori</th>
<th>Heoten Garak or Sanjo</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Music Type</strong></td>
<td>Secular music</td>
<td>Secular music</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Genre</strong></td>
<td>Solo vocal</td>
<td>Solo instrument</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Historical Origin</strong></td>
<td>Mid 18th century</td>
<td>Late 19th century</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Have texts, not score. Recently, written in Western clef</td>
<td>An oral tradition. Scores developed recently. Can improvise melody or add notes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Solo with a percussion accompaniment</td>
<td>Solo with a percussion accompaniment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Equivalent Western Genre</strong></td>
<td>Operatic solo</td>
<td>Concerto by accompanied by a percussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Form</strong></td>
<td>According to the story or text</td>
<td>Slow-Moderato- – Fast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rhythm (Jangdan)</strong></td>
<td>Jinyang (6 beats made a group ‘gak’ and 4 gaks made a jangdan. The most slow jandan uses in Pansori and Sanso) Jongmori(12/4) Jongjongmori( 12/8) Jajinmori (4 beats) Huimori (4 beats) Utmori( 4 beats) Utjongmori (4 beats)</td>
<td>Same as Pansori except Utjongmori</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Harmony</strong></td>
<td>Single melody line</td>
<td>Single melody line</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Melody</strong></td>
<td>Melody and narration determined by story</td>
<td>Can change melody freely by soloist</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


CHAPTER 6
ANALYSIS OF VIOLIN WORK *HEOTEN GARAK*

6.1. Aspects of Western and Traditional Korean Music - Overview

Composed for a prestigious violin competition, *Hoeten Garak*, makes use of a number of demanding techniques that test the performer’s command of classic Western violin technique. However, Lee also draws upon traditional Korean music techniques not only in structuring the work, but also to create new demanding passages that test the performer in ways indicative of a demanding Pansori performance. The final effect is a work that tests the violinist’s ability in the canonical studies of the violin while also testing the ability to adapt and integrate challenges influenced by traditional Korean music.

Table 3. Elements of Western, Traditional Korean, and Hoeten Garak as related to the analysis of *Heoten Garak*.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Element</th>
<th>Western</th>
<th>Traditional Korean</th>
<th>Hoeten Garak or Sanjo</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Time signature</strong></td>
<td>Use time signature</td>
<td>Does not have time signature. Use Jangdan (predetermined rhythmic patterns)</td>
<td>Do not have time signature. Use Jangdan (predetermined rhythmic patterns)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rhythm</strong></td>
<td>Use variety of rhythms</td>
<td>Relies on Jangdan</td>
<td>Jangdan changes rapidly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Melody</strong></td>
<td>Octatonic scales</td>
<td>Sustained tones. punctuated with ornamentation “contours”</td>
<td>Freely improvised</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Real sequence</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Form</strong></td>
<td>Have clear sections</td>
<td>Each sections are contrast in instrumental music</td>
<td>Slow-Moderato-Fast movements</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6.2. Aspects of Western Music

At the beginning of *Heoten Garak*, an octatonic scale is repeated in real sequence which functions as the main theme and is referenced throughout the work. During the opening Vivace, fast interval patterns following octatonic pitch collections are introduced, varying pitch collections with each measure (see Example 10 below). This sixteenth-note scalar motion forms the foundation of *Heoten Garak*, with the speed and range highlighting the ability of the performer.


Additionally, Geonyong Lee applied a variety of challenging string techniques from the Western tradition to create a demanding work befitting an international competition. The faster sections display a number of extended violin techniques to increase the range of tone colors. The use of *sul ponticello*, slur staccato scales, and the demanding harmonic passage provide a challenge for the soloist.

One distinctly difficult technique tied heavily to Western tradition is Lee’s use of double stops. As stated above, the use of harmonies is all but nonexistent in traditional Korean music,
making double stops a decidedly Western influence in this work. In particular, Lee employs double stop ornaments before a sequence of double stops with an unusual fingering technique (see Example 11 below). Lee places these double stop ornaments on open strings and has it configured such that these double stops can be played with the same fingers. The overall compositional consideration assists in the execution of the difficult passage while at the same time creating a dramatic and seemingly difficult performance.

Example 11. *Heoten Garak* mm. 71-79.

Another demanding technique is Lee’s use of wide arpeggios on high position. In Example 12, the fast arpeggios span more than an octave and require shifting position as well as string crossing while quickly increasing the dynamic.

Example 12. *Heoten Garak* mm. 88-89.
Continuous slur staccatos can put a great deal of strain on the violinist’s bowing arm. As shown in Example 13 below, Lee makes the unusual choice to include extensive use of the technique, and the demanding passage highlights the bowing technique and arm control of a truly skilled performer.


![Example music notation]

One particular Western technique manages to evoke both musical languages. Lee employs a *sul ponticello* bowing passage that creates a sonic effect similar to a traditional Korean string instrument, the Heageum.\(^{31}\) The distinct use of the timbral effect not only references the Western violin tradition but also highlights how the technique can simulate the sonic quality of the Haeguem on the violin. This compositional choice furthers the composer’s intent to blend both musical traditions through the overall effect of the performance (see Example 14 below).

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6.3. Aspects of Traditional Korean Music

As a composer, Lee has a profound knowledge of both Korean traditional string instruments and Western string instruments. It is important to note Lee’s consideration of the unique techniques of traditional Korean stringed instruments and how such techniques contrast greatly with those of Western string instruments.

As shown in Example 15A below, the slow sections of *Heoten Garak* incorporate longer sustained tones with numerous ornamentations indicative of both traditional styles. However, the nuance of the ornamentation in the Andantino section is a direct reference to how Pansori uses similar ornaments to express human emotions throughout the narrative.
Example 15A. *Heoten Garak*. mm. 41-50.

This is further employed in the Andante section at m. 119. As with the previously observed work, the ornamentation returns in a more strictly notated format (Example 5B). This approach is similar to the traditional Nonghyun ornamentation technique with the same approach to widen the contour as employed in *Rhapsody for Violin and Piano*. The end result bears a striking similarity to the development of ornamentation throughout traditional Korean music.

Example 15B. *Heoten Garak* mm.119-21.

Another distinct compositional consideration is Lee’s use of meter. Again in keeping with traditional Korean musical technique, he uses triple meter, such as time signature as 9/8, in a direct reference to most Korean Jangdan following a similar meter.
6.4. Aspects of Traditional Korean Music that Evoke Heoten Garak and Pansori

While traditional Pansori typically includes an accompanist on a percussion instrument, *Hoeten Garak* is intended for a solo violinist and therefore has no accompaniment. However, Lee references the traditional accompaniment with a distinct rhythm figure that typically occurs underneath the passages as a pedal tone. The pedal tone follows a distinct rhythm reminiscent of the traditional Jangdan patterns a percussionist would use in the accompaniment of the soloist. Example 17A shows the repeated A double stop used in a similar fashion as a pedal tone while also evoking a percussive accent akin to the traditional drum accompaniment.

Example 17A. *Heoten Garak* mm. 1-4.
The pedal tone appears frequently in the piece, providing distinct percussive accent plays above or below the melodic line. In each instance, the persistent rhythmic pattern strongly suggests the Jangdan accompaniment patterns. In Example 17B, the pedal tone on D plays above the melodic line.

Example 17B. *Heoten Garak* mm. 147-52.

![Musical example image]

The physical demands of performance, though not necessarily a compositional consideration, have a distinct influence on Lee’s approach to *Hoeten Garak*. A performance of the piece *Chunhyangga*, one of the longest Pansori pieces, takes five to eight and half hours and tests both the soloist’s endurance as well as ability. *Heoten Garak* references such a practice with twenty one measures of continuous harmonics passages with sixteenth notes in allegro (see Example 18). This unusually long and fast harmonics sections evokes Pansori’s demanding performance. Time signature changes frequently in this passage, this free meter change show’s Pansori’s soloist’s improvisation aspect. Similarly, one can interpret this section in Western tradition as an extended cadenza where the performer again performs demanding technical passages in a free meter. This dual interpretation becomes more significant when considering
Lee’s intent to capture both Western and traditional Korean musical practices into one dramatic performance.

Example 18. *Heoten Garak* mm. 20-44.
As with the previously examined work, *Heoten Garak* displays a number of musical characteristics related to Western music and traditional Korean music with particular features distinct to the style of Heoten Garak. The full effect of Lee’s compositional choices becomes evident when the full context of *Heoten Garak* is realized. As the work was commissioned for a prestigious violin competition, the composer sought to capture two interpretations of the concept of the musical virtuoso. While the demanding octatonic sections clearly evoke the image of an accomplished Western virtuoso, the subtle ornamentation of the slower sections suggests the deceptively demanding skill required by a performer of Hoeten Garak or Pansori. From a conceptual standpoint, Lee combines not only Western and traditional Korean musical techniques, but also combines the ideology of both culture’s unique interpretations of a profoundly gifted performer.
CHAPTER 7
CONCLUSION

Geonyong Lee’s compositional style and musical philosophies are evident in his approach to *Rhapsody for Piano and Violin* and *Heoten Garak*, not only through the use of strictly cultural music practices but also through the composer’s ability to conceptualize an overall performance that communicates the intended blend of Western and traditional Korean sensibilities. Known to be open to his audience and outwardly expressing his consideration for their musical experience, Lee as both a composer and instructor presents his combination of both musical worlds in ways that better reach his international audience. This analysis of *Rhapsody for Piano and Violin* and *Heoten Garak* depict a uniquely conceptual approach to Lee’s dilemma of composing Western music as a Korean man. In either work, Lee is not content to remain in either musical tradition nor does he strictly adhere to a distinct Western or traditional Korean methodology. Instead, compositional choices that reflect both musical traditions showcase both traditions in a work that is distinctly a product of both backgrounds. Rather than mimicking one musical tradition through the instrument of the other, Lee strives to interpret the techniques of both musical traditions in a way that highlights both the versatility and creative abilities of the two musical languages.

Further research on Geonyong Lee and both his musical and philosophical standpoints may further benefit scholarship in violin studies through his creative use of Western and traditional Korean string techniques. However, the insight into his philosophy also shows a truly personal compositional approach that may benefit composers and performers seeking to combine not only Western and traditional Korean music, but also a multitude of musical languages from each background and tradition. Lee’s body of work is the culmination of a composer finding his
musical identity through his cultural background and musical training. The musical insight he has developed may provide a profound outlook on the music that develops on an international stage.
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