



SamulNori: Korean Percussion for a Contemporary World (SOAS Musicology Series)

Keith Howard

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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 "samulnoriants". 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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