

66th Spring Festival 2026

Music of Korea, and Cultures in Musical Dialogue

This concert brings together performances from UCLA's **Music of Korea** and **Intercultural Improvisation: Cultures in Musical Dialogue** courses (directed by Dr. Gamin Kang), celebrating Korea's rich musical heritage alongside cross-cultural creative practice. The program features traditional and contemporary works shaped by both historical roots and collaborative experimentation, with students performing on a diverse range of Korean instruments including *gayageum* (12-string zither), *janggu* (hourglass drum), *danso* (*bamboo flute*), as well as cross-cultural music ensemble. Repertoire includes beloved folk songs such as *Arirang* and *Doraji*, vibrant percussive traditions like *Samulnori*, and newly devised pieces created through an improvisation-based process. Embracing both tradition and innovation, the beauty of traditional folk music and cross-cultural creativity come together to shape each work organically, resulting in a dynamic musical dialogue and shared creativity across cultures.

Music of Korea

This concert celebrates Korea's rich musical heritage by showcasing traditional and contemporary works rooted in shamanic rituals and agrarian life. Led by acclaimed multi-instrumentalist **Dr. Gamin Kang**, the **Korean Music Ensemble** features UCLA students performing on a variety of Korean instruments, including **gayageum** (12-string zither), **danso** (bamboo-flute), **janggu** (hourglass drum), **Vocal**, and more.

The program includes beloved folk songs such as *Arirang* and *Doraji*, along with vibrant percussive ensemble, Samulnori.

Program

Arirang, Milyang Arirang : Vocal Ensemble

(vocal, gayageum, haegeum, janggo)

Vocal : YUN, TJ / PARK, HANNAH / TANG, RACHEL / VADIVEL, AISHWARYA / KIM, SOPHIE

Janggo & Vocal : KIM, JINHEE

Gayageum : LEE, JUNGHWA

Haegeum : JOO, JEONGHYEON

Jindo Arirang, Sae-Taryeong : Gayageum Ensemble

(gayageum, janggo)

Gayageum : KRULIK, LAUREN ASHLEY / KANG, DAYEON / KIM, DAYENA / KIM, SOPHIE /
LE, PHI LONG / LEE, YEJIN / LEE, JUNGHWA

Janggo : KANG, GAMIN

Arirang, Doraji : Danso Ensemble

(danso, gayageum, janggo)

Danso : YUN, TJ / KANG, DAYEON / KIM, DAYENA / KIM, SOPHIE / KANG, GAMIN

Gayageum : KIM, GINA / KIM, HANNAH

Janggo : VADIVEL, AISHWARYA

Samulnori : Percussion Ensemble

(kkwanggari, buk, janggo, jing)

Kkwanggari : DEL REAL, JUAN

Janggo : KIM, HANNAH / KIM, SOPHIE / LE PHI LONGLE / LEE YEJIN / KRULIK, LAUREN /
KIM, GINA

Buk : TANG, RACHEL / KIM, MINJI

Jing : VADIVEL, AISHWARYA

Program Note

Arirang, Milyang Arirang *for vocal, Gyeonggi Minyo*

Arirang and *Milyang Arirang* are representative examples of *Gyeonggi minyo*, or central Korean folk songs, originating from Seoul, Gyeonggi Province, and parts of northern Chungcheong Province. These songs are characterized by an anhemitonic pentatonic scale and a clear, lyrical vocal style that emphasizes smooth phrasing and expressive nuance.

While *Arirang* is widely recognized for its themes of longing and emotional depth, *Milyang Arirang* offers a more lively and rhythmic character, reflecting regional variation within the broader *Arirang* tradition. Together, these pieces highlight the elegance and vocal refinement that define the *Gyeonggi minyo* style, while conveying the everyday sentiments and cultural identity of the communities from which they emerge.

Jindo Arirang & Sae-Taryeong *for Gayageum*

Originating from Korea's southwestern island of Jindo, *Jindo Arirang* is known for its bold rhythmic vitality and deeply expressive character. In contrast, *Sae-Taryeong* ("Bird Song") embodies a lighter, more lyrical sensibility, unfolding through graceful melodic lines and delicate phrasing.

Arirang, Doraji *for Danso & gayageum*

Arirang and *Doraji* are among Korea's most beloved folk songs, each carrying deep emotional resonance shaped by everyday life. *Arirang*, often considered Korea's unofficial national song, expresses themes of longing, resilience, and separation through its simple yet powerful melody. *Doraji*, based on a folk tune about the

bellflower root, evokes a gentle, lyrical mood that reflects both labor and quiet reflection.

Samulnori – Yeongnam Nongak

Yeongnam Nongak originates from the southeastern region of Korea, including Gyeongsang Province, and is known for its powerful energy, fast tempos, and dynamic rhythmic complexity. Rooted in agricultural rituals and communal celebrations, this tradition reflects the vitality and resilience of village life.

Samulnori—literally “playing of four instruments”—features four percussion instruments: *kkwaengwari* (small gong), *jing* (large gong), *jangu* (hourglass drum), and *buk* (barrel drum). Each instrument contributes a distinct sonic role, interlocking to create intricate rhythmic layers.

Performers

KRULIK, LAUREN ASHLEY
YUN, TJ
KANG, DAYEON
KIM, DAYENA
KIM, GINA
KIM, HANNAH
KIM, SOPHIE
LE, PHI LONG
LEE, YEJIN
PARK, HANNAH
TANG, RACHEL
VADIVEL, AISHWARYA
DEL REAL, JUAN

Guest Performers

LEE, JUNGHWA (gayageum)
KIM, JINHEE (vocal)
JOO, JEONGHYEON (haegeum)

Korean Instruments

Danso (단소)

The *danso* is a small, vertical bamboo flute with five finger holes. Its sound is soft, clear, and meditative, often used in solo performances or for educational purposes.

Despite its simplicity, the danso requires refined breath control and subtle finger movements to express delicate emotions and nuances, making it beloved for both traditional and contemporary Korean music.

Gayageum (가야금)

The *gayageum* is a 12-string zither and one of Korea's oldest and most iconic instruments. Its silk strings are plucked with the fingers to produce a gentle, resonant tone. The gayageum is admired for its expressive range—capable of conveying deep emotion, lyricism, and subtle rhythmic nuance.

Samulnori (사물놀이)

Samul (사물) means "four objects," and *nori* (놀이) means "to play." Samulnori features four percussion instruments that symbolize elements of nature:

- **Jing (징):** A large gong representing wind.
- **Kkwaenggwari (꽹가리):** A small handheld gong representing lightning and thunder; it leads the ensemble.
- **Jangu (장구):** An hourglass drum representing rain.
- **Buk (북):** A barrel drum representing clouds.

Samulnori was founded by master percussionist **Kim Duk-soo, Lee Kwang-soo, Choi Jong-sil, Kim Yong-bae** in 1978 and has since evolved into a vibrant, globally recognized performance style that combines energy, rhythm, and spirit rooted in Korean folk traditions.

K pop Music Video Screening

This screening presents a selection of student-produced music videos inspired by contemporary K-pop, highlighting creative reinterpretation, visual storytelling, and collaborative production.

"APT" – Rosé & Bruno Mars (2024)

This project integrates performance, narrative development, and visual editing into a cohesive production.

Video production by Yunus Abdurahman, Cassandra Carraher, and Harold Kim.

"ETA" – NewJeans (2023)

A collaborative student production exploring rhythm, pacing, and visual synchronization inspired by the original release.

Video production by Neha Batish, Jae Hill, Elizabeth Kim, Soonwon Kim, and Jacqueline Wu.

"Supernatural" – NewJeans (2024)

This project emphasizes mood, concept development, and stylistic interpretation through group collaboration.

Video production by Grace Brandes, Cooper Burdick, Steve Madrigal, and Alec Rodriguez.

"Golden" (2025)

A parody remake inspired by K-pop Demon Hunters

This playful reinterpretation combines humor, genre awareness, and creative adaptation of K-pop visual conventions.

Video production by Emily Wong, Dominic Labuguen, King Lau, Berta Bunch, and Hannah He.

Cultures in Musical Dialogue

This concert celebrates cross-cultural improvisation, featuring works collaboratively created by the student ensemble throughout the course (directed by Dr. Gamin Kang). Embracing a non-traditional approach to composition, the performers' concepts, ideas, stories, and creative processes take central authority, shaping each piece organically.

The result is a unique and evolving ensemble, defined by individuality and collaborations. Today's performance brings together a diverse instrumentation, including banjo, acoustic guitar, voice, gayageum, danso, piano, and percussion.

Through this dialogue of cultures and sounds, the concert explores new possibilities of musical expression, connection, and shared creativity that extend beyond cultural boundaries.

Program

Song of Mountain

YUN, TJ (Janggo)

BRANSTETTER, NATALIA LUZ (Vocal)

PIAO, RAIN (Piano, Drum)

SHI, CINDY (Electric Guitar)

BAE, KYUNGMIN (Vocal)

Free Improvisation

YUN, TJ (Danso)

BRANSTETTER, NATALIA LUZ (Vocal)

PIAO, RAIN (Vocal)

SHI, CINDY (Kazoo)

BAE, KYUNGMIN (Gayageum, Vocal)

Pansori in Blues

YUN, TJ (Janggo)

PIAO, RAIN (Vocal, Piano, Drum)

SHI, CINDY (Kazoo)

BAE, KYUNGMIN (Vocal, Gayageum)

KANG, GAMIN (Piri)

Five tones

PIAO, RAIN (Piano, Drum)
SHI, CINDY (Electric Guitar)
BAE, KYUNGMIN (Gayageum)
PARK, HANNAH (Kkwanggari)
KANG, GAMIN (Taepyungso)

Audience piece

Led by PIAO, RAIN

Ganggang-Sullae

YUN, TJ (Janggo)
BRANSTETTER, NATALIA LUZ (Vocal)
PIAO, RAIN (Vocal, Piano, Drum)
SHI, CINDY (Electric Guitar)
BAE, KYUNGMIN (Vocal, Gayageum)
KANG, GAMIN (Piri)
PARK, HANNAH (Kkwanggari)

Student performers

YUN, TJ (Danso, Korean Percussions)
BRANSTETTER, NATALIA LUZ (Vocal, Guitar)
PIAO, RAIN (Vocal, Piano, Drum)
SHI, CINDY (Electric Guitar, Kazoo)
BAE, KYUNGMIN (Vocal, Gayageum)
PARK, HANNAH (Kkwanggari)

Our Supporters

UCLA Center for Korean Studies (Director, Namhee Lee)

Korean Cultural Center Los Angeles (Director, Haedon Lee)

Music of Korea Ensemble

<https://schoolofmusic.ucla.edu/ensembles/music-of-korea-ensemble/>

Instagram https://www.instagram.com/beyond_koreanmusic_ucla/

About the Director, Dr. Gamin Kang

<https://schoolofmusic.ucla.edu/people/gamin-kang/>

SUPPORT UCLA MUSIC OF KOREA

<https://giving.ucla.edu/campaign/donate.aspx?fund=61281o>



Instagram : UCLA Music of Korea