

From Christian Hymn to Art Song: A short history of Korean art song

Kyungboon LEE (Seoul National University)

Most Korean composer and musicians were either born into a Christian family or were educated in a Christian missionary school. Contrary to other non Christian Koreans, they had been baptized with modern education. Prominent examples are Hong Nanpa, famous as the composer of the first Korean art song *Bongsunhwa*, Ahn Kiyoung, Ahn Iktae, Kim Dongjin, Kim Sungtae. That is one of the most important characteristics of Korean musicians since the early 20th century, and contrasts with Japan and China.

Therefore, there are lots of Korean art songs in the first stage still rooted in the hymn in terms of functional harmonic or simple form. Among the Western music genres the art song with a Korean text might be the most successful case of reception of Western music in Korea.

However, in the second stage Korean composers were eager to accommodate traditional musical elements into the frame of Western musical form to shape the modernized Korean art song.

I will outline the development of the art song in Korea from its first stage starting in 1920, to the next stage in the 1940s, which shows a new individual style of art song departing from the hymn. For this purpose this paper will focus on composer Kim Sunnam who played a crucial role in the history of the modern Korean art song. He overcame the shadow of the Christian hymn in his art songs.