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Music and Politics in the May 18 Gwangju Movement, South Korea

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Abstract

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May 18, 1980 marked the beginnings of a democratic movement in Gwangju, a city in the southwestern region of South Korea. Comprising primarily of residents of the Gwangju area, this movement was the community's protest against the country's military regime, under the dictatorship of General Jun Doo Hwan from 1980 to 1988. Music played an important role in this movement in terms of sustaining the spirit of resistance, affirming the movement's significance in the context of other international protest events, and in educating the general Korean population, particularly the younger generation born after the movement, about an important period in Korean political history that eventually marked a shift from military dictatorship (1980-1993) to civil democracy (from 1994 onwards). Furthermore, music that was composed after the movement helped to legitimize May 18 Gwangju movement and helped the movement become an international event through Gwangju annual concert, sponsored by The May 18 Memorial Foundation. In this way, music helped to transform the meanings and values of the May 18 Gwangju movement from an event in southwest Korea to a nationally, and even internationally recognized movement.

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Table of Contents

Title Page

Abstract

Acknowledgement

Table of Contents

List of Figures

Introduction..... 1

Chapter 1: Music During the May 18 Gwangju Movement..... 14

Chapter 2: Music After the May 18 Gwangju movement.....29

Chapter 3: Gwangju Annual Concert.....47

Conclusion.....59

Glossary.....64

Works Cited.....70

List of Figures

Figure 1: Gwangju City Hall in 2009.....	1
Figure 2: Art Exhibition in Gwangju City Hall.....	2
Figure 3: Protesting in Gwangju May 18, 2009.....	2
Figure 4: Commemorative Concert 2009 in front of City Hall.....	3
Figure 5: Score of <i>Get Away Jun Doo Hwan</i>	15
Figure 6: Score of <i>Battle Hymn of the Republic</i>	17
Figure 7: Score of <i>The Song of May</i>	21
Figure 8: Score of <i>Jindo arirang</i>	25
Figure 9: Score of Korean National Anthem.....	26
Figure 10: <i>Twosa Hwebo</i> on May 20, 1980.....	31
Figure 11: <i>Dong-A Il Bo</i> (National Newspaper) on May 27, 1980.....	31
Figure 12: North American Coalition for Human Rights on July 1980.....	32
Figure 13: Score of <i>Old Soldier's song</i>	34
Figure 14: Score of <i>Oh, Gwangju, the cross of the people</i>	37
Figure 15: Score of <i>March for My Lady</i>	39
Figure 16: Score of <i>Exemplum in Memorium Kwangju</i>	42
Figure 17: Glissando Technique in Yun Isang's <i>Exemplum in Memorium Kwangju</i>	43
Figure 18: The 2009 Gwangju Annual Concert Skit.....	49
Figure 19: Human Rights Performance Art by Ming Nin in 2009.....	51
Figure 20: The 2009 Gwangju Annual Concert (Ahn Chi Hwan's Performance).....	52
Figure 21: The 2009 Gwangju Annual Concert (Shin Young Bok's Talk Show).....	55

Introduction

Gwangju in 2009

Monday, May 18, 2009. I was standing in the square in front of the Gwangju City Hall (Figure 1), ready to embark on my field research on the music of the May 1980 democratic uprising in Gwangju, South Korea (known as the Gwangju movement). On this day, 29 years ago, in this city hall and in this square, 606 protestors demonstrated against military dictatorship. Today, several notable events were going on simultaneously: an art exhibition in the city hall displaying photos of the May 1980 demonstrations (Figure 2) ; a protest outside the city hall against the planned demolition of the building (Figure 3); and a concert to commemorate the May 18 Gwangju movement (Figure 4).

Figure 1: Gwangju City Hall in 2009



Figure 2: Art Exhibition in Gwangju City Hall



Figure 3: Protesting in Gwangju May 18, 2009



Figure 4: Commemorative Concert 2009 in front of City Hall



The primary method of my field research was interviewing participants, non-participants, and the younger generation of Koreans in Gwangju. I interviewed about fifteen participants of the May 18 Gwangju movement, all of whom are still involved in current events related to the movement. I also interviewed thirty non-participants and sixty younger generations (mainly high school students), who did not know much about the May 18 Gwangju movement. I attended the May 18 Gwangju movement events, including Gwangju Annual Concert, Human Rights Performance Art, and the Gwangju Human Rights Award ceremony in order to examine the purpose and meaning of those events.

May 18 Gwangju Movement and Music

May 18, 1980 marked the beginnings of a democratic movement in Gwangju, a city in the southwestern region of South Korea. Comprised primarily of residents of the Gwangju area, this movement was the community's protest against the country's military regime, under the dictatorship of General Jun Doo Hwan from 1980 to 1988. Music played an important role in this movement in terms of sustaining the spirit of resistance, affirming the movement's significance in the context of other international protest events, and in educating the general Korean population, particularly the younger generation born after the movement, about an important period in Korean political history that eventually marked a shift from military dictatorship (1980-1993) to civil democracy (from 1994 onwards).

Protestors used various kinds of music during the movement. They used *Jindo arirang*, a traditional folksong from the southwestern part of Korea; the South Korean national anthem; and tunes from other international movements, such as *Battle Hymn of the Republic*. Music related to the movement continued to be prevalent even after the movement. New songs were composed in various genres, such as popular songs and symphonic pieces. Those popular songs that were composed after the May 18 Gwangju movement were often performed in the annual concert to commemorate the event.

Examples of these popular songs include *Old Soldier's Song* by Yang Hee Eun (b. 1952),

Oh, Gwangju, the cross of the people by Kim Jun Tae (b. 1960), and *The March for My Lady* by Kim Jong Ryul (b. 1957). Also, an example of a renowned classical symphonic piece was Yun Isang's (1917-1995) *Exemplum in Memorium Kwangju*. The purpose of these newly composed music was to publicize May 18 Gwangju movement nationally and internationally, since few people knew what had happened then, due to the blockage of media during the movement. In order to broaden public knowledge of the May 18 Gwangju movement, participants of the movement officially built The May 18 Memorial Foundation and museums in 1994. The foundation also began to sponsor an annual concert since 1994 to educate the younger generation and people who lived outside of Gwangju by introducing new songs about the movement. The newly composed music and annual concerts helped the May 18 Gwangju movement grow from a localized regional event to the national movement, and eventually become an international movement.

Regionalism in South Korea

The May 18 Gwangju movement was indicative of the importance of regionalism in Korea in terms of place, people, and songs. People from the southwestern region of Korea, where Gwangju is located, often consider themselves to be unfairly treated, almost like secondary citizens. The sense of being a secondary citizen was so deeply

rooted into the people of the southwestern region that it became a part of how they saw themselves, and how they were seen by others.

The sense of regionalism began during the Three Kingdom era (18 B.C.-668). The Korean peninsula was divided into the Gokuryo, Baekje, and Silla tribal kingdoms. The sense of regional hostility intensified during the Goryeo dynasty (918-1392), especially when Wang Geon (Founder of Goryeo) was in power. Wang Geon unified the Korean peninsula after defeating Later Baekje (892-936), which was located in the southwestern region. He prohibited the hiring of people from the territory of Later Baekje, because his hatred for the southwestern region grew stronger after the war. Wang Geon openly called the area of Later Baekje a “perverse and rebellious land” (Yu 1990, 26). Since then, the notion of people from the southwestern region of South Korea as secondary citizens has remained in the Korean consciousness. This sense of being a secondary citizen became characteristic of regional identity in the southwestern region.

The sense of regionalism again intensified during the military rule of Park Jung Hee (1917-1979) and Jun Doo Hwan (b.1931) from 1961 to 1987. Both men were from the southeastern area, where hostility existed with regard to the southwestern region.¹ Under the military regime, many ruling elites were picked from the southeastern region (ibid. 26). Hobsbawn explains that, “States and national movements could mobilize

¹ For more information on Park Jung Hee, see Han (2004).

certain variants of feelings of collective belongings which already existed” (Hobsbawn 1990, 46). The May 18 Gwangju movement originated from the grievances that people of the southwestern area already had since the Three Kingdom era and the movement was, to a large extent, built upon those grievances.

The sense of regionalism that was introduced during the Three Kingdom era is still ingrained in the Gwangju people. Their expressions, food, dialects, and actions are distinct from people from other regions. People from Gwangju particularly express their feelings outwardly using bodily gestures. They also use guttural tones in their everyday speech, and also in songs that represent their region, such as *Jindo Arirang*. This sense of regionalism, which has historical resonance, is central to the May 18 Gwangju movement.

Development of May 18 Gwangju Movement

The May 18 Gwangju movement was a pursuit of democracy. Its origins may be traced back to 1979 when the then President Park Jung Hee was assassinated by his Prime Minister, Choi Gyu-Ha(1919-2006), who automatically succeeded as South Korea’s President. Choi, however, was merely a puppet under the control of General Jun Doo Hwan, an extremely powerful military figure, who proclaimed himself as the President on December 12, 1979 after a military coup (Steinberg 1988, 662). The Korean

people were dissatisfied with the military regime; they wanted a democratic government and a new constitution based on democracy.

At the same time, the Korean people, particularly those from Gwangju, supported Kim Dae Jung (1924-2009), a candidate for the presidential election that was to be held prior to the military coup. Kim was from Gwangju and fought to establish democracy in Korea. Jun Doo Hwan and Kim Dae Jung were political rivals and different ideologies; they were also from different regions in Korea. Jun was born and raised in the southeastern region of Korea. He continued to enforce militarism, started by the preceding president, Park Jung Hee. On the other hand, Kim Dae Jung, who was supported by the people from the southwestern region, wanted to establish democracy in Korea. As Jun claimed to be the president by overthrowing the previous government on December 12, 1979, Kim, who was an active member of the opposition party, claimed in 1980 that Jun Doo Hwan's regime was not democratic, and therefore, unconstitutional. In order to prevent the people from protesting, Jun Doo Hwan tried to kill Kim Dae Jung; Jun did not succeed in assassinating Kim but caused him serious injuries in 1980. Knowing that he would not become president on democratic terms and in order to prevent mass protest, Jun enforced martial law in May 1980, which automatically removed all rights of the Korean people, including their freedom of speech.

On May 17, 1980, all schools and businesses were shutdown. With the desire for Korea to move toward democratization, the United States persuaded Jun not to hurt Kim Dae Jung. In return, the U.S. recognized Jun Doo Hwan as president of South Korea. Students from Jun Nam University in Gwangju started to protest against the government in support of democracy. Starting on May 18, 1980, the military forces used violence against these protestors. With weapons taken from the police, students took control of the city hall and staged a series of demonstrations, all of which were accompanied by protest songs. On May 27, 1980, these demonstrations came to an end when the military killed all who remained in the city hall vicinity (Baker 2003, 137).

May 18 Gwangju Movement and Marginality

The fact that Jun Doo Hwan's regime tried to split Korean society between the southeastern and southwestern part of Korea may be understood in terms of marginality. Marginality is defined as the spatial and temporal cleavages within society (Szemere 1992, 94). For example, in the context of music and art, the disjunctions between the professional and underground art worlds were marginal in a sense that one group was more prestigious compared to the other group. The Hungarian punk/new wave movement defined marginality in new ways by overcoming differences of social classes through their music (ibid. 105). Despite the effort of Jun Doo Hwan's regime to marginalize

southwest Korea, music during the May 18 Gwangju movement served as a symbol to overcome this marginality. Instead, music foregrounded the southwestern region by nationalizing the Gwangju movement.

Different Meanings in Music

A song could be interpreted differently depending on the different time, place, and people. For example, when Taiwanese pop diva A-mei (Zhang Hui Mei) sang the Republic of China's national anthem for Chen Shui-Bian's Presidential Inauguration Ceremony on May 20, 2000, there were distinct opinions. There were people, including A-mei herself, who thought of it as a symbol of connecting the Republic of China to Taiwan. However, the Republic of China saw the fact as an indication of Taiwanese independence (Guy 2002, 105). Similarly, the tune that was used during the May 18 Gwangju movement sent different messages depending on different contexts. For example, *Battle Hymn of the Republic*, the tune that was used during the Gwangju movement was used by Ralph Chaplin (1887-1961) to encourage the Industrial Workers of the World Organization in 1915. Michael Quin (1896-1950), a leader of the Communist Organization, also used the *Battle Hymn of the Republic* tune to create the communist anthem *Seeing Red* in 1936. In the May 18 Gwangju movement, use of the same tune suggests that the protestors were trying to draw on these protest movements to

legitimize and strengthen the May 18 Gwangju movement. This may be seen as nationalism through the process of imagined community: specifically, a community formed through music (Anderson 1991, 7).

Nationalism, in another sense, could be defined as an ideology that was conterminous with political and cultural boundaries (Eriksen 1993, 108). Nationalism was evoked when citizens did not like the way the government ruled the country. For example, citizens did not like Jun Doo Hwan's dictatorship in South Korea at the time of May 18 Gwangju movement that they used songs that symbolized the nation, such as the national anthem.²

Few studies have been done on the music of the Gwangju movement, but studies of music and politics have been done on other social movements. One example is the Tiananmen incident, a democratic movement in China that was started on June 4, 1989 by college students. During the incident, student leaders used Cui Jian's music to fight against the government. Cui Jian's *yaogun yinyue* (rock and roll) had a rough vocal style with lyrics that have often been interpreted as having politically oppositional content (Brace and Friedlander 1992, 119). Furthermore, students empowered themselves with Cui Jian's song by translating one of his songs "Yiwu suoyou" to "We Have Nothing,"

² For more information on music and nationalism, particularly as it pertains to music in Great Britain and European classical music, see Vaughan Williams (1963).

instead of “I Have Nothing” (ibid. 121). Similarly, the music that was used during the May 18 Gwangju movement and songs composed after the movement had lyrics and styles that empowered the movement and the people in the movement, which eventually influenced other democratic movements in different countries.

There were two approaches to music in politics according to Courtney Brown. One was representational, which was the direct method of linking music with politics by using lyrics and different performance styles. An example of representational music is the national anthem, which incites patriotic emotion through the lyrics. The other was associational, which was the method where someone besides the composer made a connection between a song and its political messages (Brown 2008, 4). An example is Beethoven’s ninth symphony, which illustrates different kinds of German patriotism depending on the different ideology of each German period (ibid., 25). For example, while the Nazi regime used Beethoven’s ninth symphony to send a message to the German people to “unite” against other races, the same piece was used during the fall of the Berlin Wall to “unite” East and West Germany (ibid., 26).

Similar to Courtney Brown’s theory of representational and associational approaches is Thomas Turino’s theory that divided music between participatory performance and presentational performance. Participatory performance is that which does not have distinctions between audiences and performers (Turino 2008, 26). An

example of participatory performance is the performance of DJs in North American clubs, in which audiences participate (ibid., 24). In contrast, presentational performance is a performance that has distinctions between audiences and performers (ibid., 26). An example of presentational performance is the European classical music concert in which audiences sit still to listen to performers on stage (ibid., 52).

The musical styles that were introduced corresponded to the function of the music. In the May 18 Gwangju movement, there were representational and associational types of music as well as participatory and presentational performances. Music during the movement, such as *Get Away Jun Doo Hwan* that used the *Battle Hymn of the Republic* tune, was associational music in which leaders of the movement, who were not the composers of the tune, imparted meanings to the song. Music that was composed after the movement, such as *The March for My Lady* by Kim Jong Ryul, was representational music that added the May 18 Gwangju movement into its lyrics and its performance. Furthermore, music during and after the May 18 Gwangju movement used both participatory and presentational performances. Music during the movement was mainly participatory performance, where leaders and protestors sang with call and response technique. Music after the movement, especially in the annual concert, used presentational performances was used.

Chapter 1: Music During the May 18 Gwangju movement

After Jun Doo Hwan proclaimed himself the president in December 12, 1979, a protest against Jun's military government occurred in April, 1980 in all regions of South Korea. On May 17, 1980, martial law was established throughout the country and all business and institutions, including colleges, were closed down. To enforce martial law, the soldiers of Jun Doo Hwan's government began to block the gates of all colleges, including Jun Nam University, the college in Gwangju. Students started to gather to face the soldiers and started to sing *Get Away Jun Doo Hwan*, a song that was frequently sung among the protestors throughout the movement.

The music that was used during the May 18 Gwangju movement was associational music in that people besides the composers used it to make connections between music and politics (Brown 2008, 4). The leaders of the movement used music that already existed, such as the national anthem, and changed its meanings to fit the movement. The music that was used during the movement was also participatory music in that there were no distinctions between performers and audiences (Turino 2008, 26). The protesters sang tunes, following the movement's leaders by using various techniques, such as call and response.

International Tunes and Added Lyrics

The leaders used the tunes that already existed and added lyrics to fit the music in the May 18 Gwangju movement. The tune of the *Battle Hymn of the Republic* was used during the May 18 Gwangju movement by adding the lyrics “Get Away Jun Doo Hwan” to the tune. The *Battle Hymn of the Republic* was originally composed in 1861 by Julia Ward Howe as an American abolitionist song that was composed for the movement to end the slave trade and emancipate slaves. The lyrics of *Get Away Jun Doo Hwan*, which used the tune of the *Battle Hymn of the Republic*, consisted of a repetition of the line, “Get Away Jun Doo Hwan, ooh la” (Figure 5).

Figure 5: Score of *Get Away Jun Doo Hwan*

Get Away Jun Doo Hwan

The image shows a musical score for the song "Get Away Jun Doo Hwan". It consists of two staves of music in 4/4 time, with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The first staff contains the first four measures of the melody, with lyrics "Get Away Jun Doo Hwan" and "Get Away" written below. The second staff starts with a measure number "5" and contains the next six measures, with lyrics "Jun Doo Hwan", "Get Away Jun Doo Hwan", and "Ooh La Ooh La La" written below. The melody is a simple, rhythmic tune consisting of eighth and quarter notes.

According to Yoon Gwang Jang, who was a teacher at Gwangju Daedong High School in 1980 and who also served as president of The May 18 Memorial Foundation, students started to learn the song through call and response technique; “The leaders would sing first and other students started to follow them. Although they did not know

the songs, the protestors learned very quickly” (Yoon 2009). The *Battle Hymn of the Republic* was in ABA form that had a simple rhythm and phrase structure. According to Lee Euy Geum, a participant of the Gwangju movement, the tune of the *Battle Hymn of the Republic* was familiar to all Koreans at that time, “We learned the tunes in our school and so everyone in the class was familiar with the tune” (Lee 2009). Therefore, the tune of *Get Away Jun Doo Hwan* was relatively easy for protestors to follow, especially since the whole song was composed of only one line of lyrics. This implies that *Get Away Jun Doo Hwan* was created with a practical purpose, that is, for the masses to sing during the movement.

The use of lyrics specific to the Gwangju movement localized the tune of the *Battle Hymn of the Republic*, a widely-known song used in other international movements. Through the songs that students chose to sing in the beginning of the movement, the May 18 Gwangju movement became a symbol of democratic movements internationally. The leaders used songs and music that were borrowed from other international democratic events, such as the American military tune (the *Battle Hymn of the Republic*) and the French melody (*Qui A Tue Grand Maman*: “Who Killed the Grandmother”). The fact that the leaders borrowed tunes from international songs evoked a sense of internationalism for the otherwise regional May 18 Gwangju movement right from the beginning. Also, according to Lee Gang-Gap, who was a citizen protestor during

the movement, the use of international tunes for their government suggested that leaders were aware of the international affect that the May 18 Gwagnju movement would have: “We knew that the May 18 Gwangju movement would influence democratic movements in other countries someday” (Lee 2009).

When the *Battle Hymn of the Republic* was used in different contexts, it evoked different sentiments. Ralph Chaplin, an Industrial Workers of the World organizer, wrote militant lyrics and produced *Solidarity Forever*, which became the official anthem of American Labor movement in 1915. Furthermore, Michael Quin used the same tune and created the communist anthem in 1936 for a May Day celebration in *Seeing Red*. The original lyrics of the *Battle Hymn of the Republic*, *Solidarity Forever*, and *Seeing Red* are as follows:

Figure 6: Score of the *Battle Hymn of the Republic*

Battle Hymn of the Republic

The image shows a musical score for the 'Battle Hymn of the Republic'. It consists of three staves of music in a 4/4 time signature, with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The lyrics are written below the notes. The first staff starts with a measure of rest, followed by the lyrics 'Mine— eyes have seen the glo ry of the com ing of the Lord, He is'. The second staff begins with a measure number '4' and contains the lyrics 'tramp ling out the vin tage where the grapes of wrath are stored He hath'. The third staff begins with a measure number '6' and contains the lyrics 'loosed the fate ful light ning of His ter ri ble swift sword, His truth is march ing on'. The score ends with a double bar line.

Mine— eyes have seen the glo ry of the com ing of the Lord, He is

4 tramp ling out the vin tage where the grapes of wrath are stored He hath

6 loosed the fate ful light ning of His ter ri ble swift sword, His truth is march ing on

The Battle Hymn of the Republic (1861)

Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord:
 He is trampling out the vintage where the grapes of wrath are stored;
 He hath loosed the fateful lightning of His terrible swift sword:
 His truth is marching on.

(Chorus)

Glory, glory, hallelujah!
 Glory, glory, hallelujah!
 Glory, glory, hallelujah!
 His truth is marching on.

I have seen Him in the watch-fires of a hundred circling camps,
 They have builded Him an altar in the evening dews and damps;
 I can read His righteous sentence by the dim and flaring lamps:
 His day is marching on.

(Chorus)

Glory, glory, hallelujah!
 Glory, glory, hallelujah!
 Glory, glory, hallelujah!
 His day is marching on.

Solidarity Forever (1915)

Solidarity forever!
 Solidarity forever!
 Solidarity forever!
 For the union makes us strong

When the union's inspiration
 through the workers' blood shall run,
 There can be no power greater
 anywhere beneath the sun.
 Yet what force on earth is weaker
 than the feeble strength of one?
 But the union makes us strong.

They have taken untold millions
 that they never toiled to earn,
 But without our brain and muscle
 not a single wheel can turn.
 We can break their haughty power;
 gain our freedom when we learn
 That the Union makes us strong.

In our hands is placed a power
 greater than their hoarded gold;
 Greater than the might of armies,
 magnified a thousand-fold.

We can bring to birth a new world
 from the ashes of the old
 For the Union makes us strong.

Seeing Red (1936)

We will end their greedy system which is rotten to the core,
 It has trampled out the souls of men and slaughtered them in war,
 It shall make the lives of working men a hell on earth no more:
 We swear to change the world
 Build the Farmer-Labor party,
 And Change the Lousy World
 We are marching from the factories, the offices, and fields,
 With the hammer and the sickle carved upon our flaming shields,
 We have joined our might in common cause, our courage never yields
 We Swear to Change the World

The text of the *Battle Hymn of the Republic*, *Solidarity Forever*, and *Seeing Red* are similar in the sense that they were against their current systems, such as ideology, that they all wanted change in their system. In the lyrics of *Solidarity Forever*, Ralph Chaplin was against the current system and he wanted the laborers to rise against it, “We can break their haughty power; gain our freedom when we learn.” Similarly, Michael Quin showed his communist ideology by sending messages to the people that laborers needed to be as wealthy as others. He wanted all those laborers to rise and change the world by writing, “We Swear to Change the World.” In the case of the May 18 Gwangju movement, the one-line lyric shows the people’s unhappiness toward Jun Doo Hwan’s military government. Furthermore, according to the May 18 Gwangju movement protester Lee Euy Geum, the fact that protesters of the movement sang the song in front

of Jun Doo Hwan's soldiers suggested that they wanted to send the message that they were not against the soldiers, but they were against power behind the soldiers, that is, Jun Doo Hwan. Lee explained, "We wanted to tell the soldiers that we were friends who have the same purposes; fighting for our country" (Lee 2009).

Similar to the May 18 Gwangju movement, the Tiananmen protest (1989) was not a fight against the system. Students tried to send the message that they were not against the system (communism and soldiers), but they wanted dialogues with the government to make change (Brace and Friedlander 1992, 119). Students gathered in Tiananmen Square during Hu Yaobang's funeral and chanted, "*Aiguo wu zui*" ("Patriotism is no crime"), and "*Li Peng duihua*" ("Li Peng talk with us") (Samson 1991, 37). The students also used music to send messages during the movement. For example, during their encounters with soldiers, they chanted "*Renmin jundui ai renmin, renmin jundui baohu renmin*" ("The People's army loves the people, the people's army protects the people") (ibid., 38). This suggests that students tried to send messages to the soldiers that they were not enemies; rather they were friends who worked for the same country.

"The music and song of such a tradition was defined as much by who was singing it, to whom, where and when, as by important considerations of content and form, theme and language, poetry and symbol, instrumentation and arrangement, melody, rhythm, harmony, tempo, and timbre" (Fairley 1985, 308). Not only do the different

context of time, place, and people, but also the different style of lyrics and their functions change the meanings of the music.

Another international tune that was used during the movement was *The Song of May*, which used the tune from *Qui A Tue Grand Maman*: “Who Killed the Grandmother” (Figure 7). The original tune was composed by Michel Polanareff in 1971. It was a French melody that described a grandmother who guarded her garden against the government until her death. Leaders of the May 18 Gwangju movement added the following lyrics to the tune:

Figure 7: Score of *The Song of May*

Figure 7 shows the musical score for "The Song of May" in 4/4 time, G major. The score consists of three staves of music with Korean lyrics underneath. The lyrics are: "꽃잎처럼 금남로에 뿌려진 너의 붉은 피" (Like petals scattered in Keumnam-ro, your red blood is scattered), "두부처럼 질리워진 어여쁜 너의 젖가슴" (Your breasts cut off like bean curds, beautiful breasts), and "오월그날이 다시오면 우리 가슴은 붉은 피를 내" (If the very day of May comes again, our breasts burst with blood).

Your red blood scattered in Keumnam-ro [name of a road in Gwangju] just like petals
 Your breasts cut off like bean curds
 If the very day of May comes again, our breasts burst with blood

Why shoot, why pierce, where did the truck take us
 Thousands of bloodshot eyes of Mangwol-dong are crowded
 Let us survivors gather and go together

If the very day of May comes again, our breasts burst with blood
 If the very day of May comes again, our breasts full of blood blood blood.

The lyrics told the people to fight against Jun Doo Hwan as revenge for those dead civilians as it suggested in one of the lines, “Let us survivors gather and go together.” The lyric was not one simple line, nor was the tune familiar to every protester like the tune for *Get Away Jun Doo Hwan*. However, the simple rhythm and phrasing, as well as the limited melodic range helped protesters to easily follow through the call and response technique. A protester Lee Euy Geum explained, “*The Song of May* was not as easy as *Get Away Jun Doo Hwan* to follow, but we managed them all” (Lee 2009). The lyric itself was specific to the Gwangju region for the Gwangju people, but an international tune mixed with regional elements symbolically broadened the May 18 Gwangju movement into an international event at that time.

Associational Music by Using Preexisting Songs

On May 18, 1980, about 100 students and citizens who heard about the martial law gathered in front of Jun Nam University. Soldiers clubbed protestors to the ground. Hearing news about the soldiers’ violence, about 3000 citizens gathered in front of the City Hall. On May 20, 1980, about 100,000 students and citizens gathered with weapons, such as barks. The leaders, who were students from Jun Nam University, started to sing and the protestors followed them. The student leaders chose songs from the southwestern region, such as *Jindo Arirang*, to sing during the May 18 Gwangju movement. It was a

well-known folk song from Jindo Island on the southern tip of South Korea and an iconic tune of the southwest region of the Korean peninsula (Figure 8).

The musical structure and lyrics of Arirang, which details a woman waiting forlornly for her lover on the banks of river, had roots in the mountainous region around Jongson, several kilometers east to Seoul. Early in the 20th century, regional versions started to appear. Of the many versions, the best-known today is probably *Jindo Arirang*, which on the island of Jindo was reputed to have been developed by a shaman using the *taegum* (horizontal bamboo flute) (Howard 1999, 8).

Jindo Arirang retains a strong Jolla regional identity. Traditionally, people in Jolla, a reference to the southwestern region of Korea, are known to have strong emotions and used characteristic modal features in their vocal music. In order to express their sorrows and strong emotions, Jolla singers use thick vocalization, for example, in the singing of *Jindo Arirang* (Howard 1999, 7). In contrast to the Jolla vocal style, vocal characteristics of folksongs from the central province that surrounds the capital city, Gyonggi, are more lyrical and light. In addition, Jolla vocal style is different from the southeastern region, where a trembling vocalization is often used as an expression of strong emotions.

Refrain:

Arirang, Arirang, Arariyo,
Arirang Pass is the long road you go.

1st Verse:

If you leave and forsake me, my own,
Ere three miles you go, lame you'll have grown.

2nd Verse:

Wondrous time, happy time—let us delay;
Till night is over, go not away.

3rd Verse:

Arirang Mount is my Tear-Falling Hill,
So seeking my love, I cannot stay still.

4th Verse:

The brightest of stars stud the sky so blue;
Deep in my bosom burns bitterest rue.

5th Verse:

Man's heart is like water streaming downhill;
Woman's heart is well water—so deep and still.

6th Verse:

Young men's love is like pinecones seeming sound,
But when the wind blows, they fall to the ground.

7th Verse:

Birds in the morning sing simply to eat;
Birds in the evening sing for love sweet.

8th Verse:

When man has attained to the age of a score,
The mind of a woman should be his love.

9th Verse:

The trees and the flowers will bloom for aye,
But the glories of youth will soon fade away.

Figure 8: Score of *Jindo arirang*

아령보

(세마치) 권라도 민요 **진도 아리랑**

(후렴) 아리 아리랑 쓰리쓰리랑 아라리가 났네 예 예 예
아 리 랑 흥 흥 흥 아 라 리 가 났네

(노래) 가 지 결 마 제 오 온 가 지 변 마 고 개
전 달 이 진 줄 다 지 곱 이 가 그 문 불 사 네 가 졌 네

(후렴) 아리 아리랑 쓰리쓰리랑 아라리가 났네 예 예 예
아 리 랑 흥 흥 흥 아 라 리 가 났네

(노래) 수 천 불 화 가 불 인 세 잔 병 도 가 ~ 만 세
이 내 알 이 지 ~ 숨 인 폭 수 불 ~ 타 ~ 도 많 타 세

(후렴) 아리 아리랑 쓰리쓰리랑 아라리가 났네 예 예 예
아 리 랑 흥 흥 흥 아 라 리 가 났네

(원창리)

On May 20, 1980, leaders published the newspaper, *Twosa Hwebo*, (Warrior Times) to explain to citizens what had occurred. Na Myung Gwan explained, “Yoon Sang-Won and other students from Night Middle School, where they worked in the morning and took classes at night, were the leaders who gathered the people to publish the newspaper” (Na 2009). The purpose of the newspaper was to explain what innocent citizens ought to do against Jun Doo Hwan’s military regime. Furthermore, taxi and bus drivers protested with their cars against the soldiers. On May 21 1980, soldiers started to shoot the protestors. Angered by the killing of protestors, Gwangju citizens stole guns from the police station and started a shoot-out with soldiers. According to Kim Jun Bong,

As with the song, *Get Away Jun Doo Hwan*, the fact that protestors sang the National Anthem when they fought with the soldiers suggests that the use of the National Anthem was a way to establish a common ground with the military, that both sides were parts of the same national entity. Symbolically then, the confrontation was not between citizens and the military per se, but between citizens and the hegemonic power behind the soldiers—Jun Doo Hwan.³

On May 22 1980, the soldiers retreated out of Gwangju and protestors thought that they won against Jun Doo Hwan's regime. However, on May 27 1980, soldiers suddenly invaded City Hall and arrested those protestors that were remaining.

Literature Review of Other Movements

As I have shown in this chapter, the same songs had different meanings due to different contexts, such as different peoples, time, and place. The tune of *Battle Hymn of the Republic* was used as a communist anthem as well as the official anthem of the American Labor movement. Also, the same tune was used in the May 18 Gwangju movement for democracy. Another example was A-mei's use of the Republic of China's national anthem for the Presidential Inauguration Ceremony in 2000 from the introduction. There were people, including A-mei herself, who thought of it as a symbol

³ For more information on Korean history and the Gwangju movement, see Eckert (1990).

of connecting the Republic of China to Taiwan. However, the Republic of China saw the fact as an indication of Taiwanese independence (Guy 2002, 105).

According to Alan Merriam, music existed through social interaction among human beings. He further explains that, “cultural and social factors shape music to an even greater extent than is implied in the fact that music sound accords with peoples’ ideas of what is right and wrong in music” (Merriam 1964, 28). According to Martin Stokes, “the global dimensions of the local product are often understood in different ways by record companies, studio managers, technicians, and musicians” (Stokes 2004, 53). For example, one of the popular genres of world music from the Northern African country of Algeria, *Rai*, was interpreted and recorded differently from record studios in France to record studios in Algeria in order to attract local audiences (ibid., 54). The theories by Merriam and Stokes suggest that the meaning of music changes depending upon different contexts, such as time, place, and people. The music that was used during the May 18 Gwangju movement represented the southwestern region (*Jindo Arirang*), as well as drawing symbolic connections to other similar demonstrations in other countries (*Battle Hymn of the Republic* and *Qui A Tue Grand Maman*: “Who Killed the Grandmother”). The effectiveness of these songs lies in the process in which they were localized through changes in lyrics and performance processes, which made them relevant to the May 18 Gwangju movement.

Chapter 2: Music After the May 18 Gwangju Movement

After the May 18 Gwangju movement, different forms of media, including the newspapers and music broadcast and performance, carried news about the May 18 Gwangju movement. In contrast to the participatory music that was used during the May 18 Gwangju movement, which did not have a distinction between audiences and performers, music that was used after the movement was mainly presentational music (Turino 2008, 26). Here, performers did not merely use simple, functional lyrics, but rather added more complicated, poetic lyrics to send messages about the movement to their audiences. Furthermore, most of the music that was used after the May 18 Gwangju movement was representational music where composers and singers intentionally linked the music to the political movement (Brown 2008, 4).

Different Reports from Different Media

Jun Doo Hwan, who did not want anymore protests against his regime and who still had the power to control the media, labeled the protestors from the May 18 Gwangju movement as “criminals.” For example, *Dong-A Il Bo* (Dong-A Times) reported that these “criminals” set the TV station on fire. (*Dong-A Il Bo* 1980). However, according to Lee Gi Bum, a protestor at the time of the movement, the TV station was on fire because of the canons that the soldiers fired near the TV station (Lee 2009). Knowing that all

forms of media were blocked in Gwangju, protestors published their own newspaper called *Twosa Hwebo* during the movement. It covered stories of those protestors who were killed by Jun Doo Hwan's military forces as well as what generally happened in Gwangju at the time of the movement. The newspaper also covered what citizens of Gwangju should do for the movement. According to *Twosa Hwebo*, the TV station was set on fire by Jun Doo Hwan's militia (*Twosa Hwebo* 1980) (Figure 10). When *Twosa Hwebo* was distributed after the movement, people realized that the different newspapers sent different messages (Figure 11). Eye witness accounts also contrasted with some newspaper reports. Moreover, foreign reporters from all other countries, who happened to have representative in Gwangju at the time of the movement, began to publish stories about what they saw in Gwangju (Figure 12). People's interest in the May 18 Gwangju movement increased and they began to become suspicious about what the national newspaper reported.

Figure 10: Twosa Hwebo on May 20, 1980

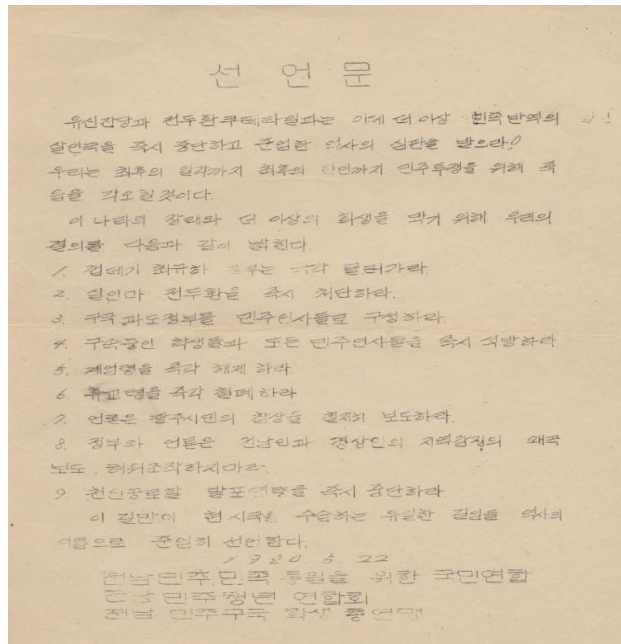


Figure 11: Dong-A Il Bo (National Newspaper) on May 27, 1980



Figure 12: North American Coalition for Human Rights on July 1980



While other forms of media were controlled by the government, music that was created after the movement sympathized with students and citizens from Gwangju by hailing them as “protestors,” instead of calling them “criminals.” Music was the only form of media to reveal what really had happened in the May 18 Gwangju movement, since the TV station and radio station as well as the press were controlled by Jun Doo Hwan, according to the protester, Lee Euy Geum. He explained, “Music was the only form of media that reported what we have witnessed during May 18 Gwangju movement that music helped us to ease our sorrows” (Lee 2009). Music gave a new message, a message that other forms of media, such as national newspaper, did not give.

The genre of music that was composed after the May 18 Gwangju movement was mostly popular songs. The popular songs featured a solo singer accompanied by a guitar, a style of performance not unlike like protest songs (*nueva canción*) used in Chile and Argentina in the 1960s-70s by singers such as Violetta Parra, Victor Jara, and Mercedes Sosa (Tumas-Serna 1992; Bernstein 2003). The fact is that the messages were sent out by popular songs led people, who did not know about the May 18 Gwangju movement due to media blockage, to become interested in the movement. According to Cho Jinhe, who lived in Seoul at the time of the movement, the lyrics of popular songs intended to commemorate those protestors who died from the movement made people think about the movement itself. “People paid more attention to the May 18 Gwangju movement after they heard the music that was composed for the movement, including myself” (Cho 2009).

Music Composed After the May 18 Gwangju Movement

Popular songs that were composed after the May 18 Gwangju movement were *Old Soldier’s Song* by Yang Hee Eun, *Oh, Gwangju, the Cross of the People* by Kim Jun Tae, and *The March for My Lady* by Kim Jong Ryul. *Old Soldier’s Song* sung by Yang Hee Eun was already a popular song before the May 18 Gwangju movement started (Figure 13). In her song, Yang wrote lyrics about her dead father who had participated in

the Korean War. After her father's death, the only thing that he left behind in the world was his military uniform and the singer imagined a time when her father was healthy and brave at the time of the Korean War.

Figure 13: Score of *Old Soldier's song*

늙은 군인의 노래

노래 양희은

The musical score is for the song 'Old Soldier's Song' (늙은 군인의 노래) by Yang Hee-eun. It is written in 4/4 time and consists of two systems. The first system features a vocal line with the lyrics '나 태어난 이 강산에 군인이 되어' (I was born in this land, became a soldier), a piano accompaniment, and a snare drum part. The second system features a vocal line with the lyrics '꽃 피고 눈 내리기 이 연-삼-십 년' (Flowers bloom, snow falls, 30 years), a piano accompaniment, and a snare drum part. Chords C, F, G, and Am are indicated above the vocal lines.

I became a soldier in the land that I was born
 It has been already 30 years
 What did you do, what will you do
 I can be dead soon or later

Sons and daughters, don't be sad
 You are sons and daughters of proud soldier
 Do you want to wear good clothes? Do you want to eat good food?
 No, you are sons and daughters of proud soldier
 What are your life-long wishes?
 My wish is to go to Mountain GumGang with my grandsons and granddaughters
 I have been waiting for those days
 Waiting waiting, my youthful days are gone

My youthful days cannot come back
 My youthful days are gone with green military clothes

Old Soldier's song was composed in 1971. After the movement, the Korean public began to relate *Old Soldier's song* to the May 18 Gwangju movement. In contrast to other music that was used after the movement, *Old Soldier's song* was associational music in that people linked the song to the movement without the composer's intention (Brown 2008, 4). In *Old Soldier's song*, the protesters were symbolized as soldiers, in the sense that survival was uncertain, since protesters in the movement were fighting against Jun Doo Hwan's soldiers. The protester Lee Euy Geum explained, "*Old Soldier's song* suggested that protesters and soldiers fought for different ideologies but for same country, that they were not enemies, but rather, friends. Protesters fought against the power that was controlling the soldiers, Jun Doo Hwan" (Lee 2009). Similar to the May 18 Gwangju movement, in the Tiananmen incident (1989) students chanted directly to soldiers to send messages that they were not against the system (communism and soldiers). They further sent messages to the soldiers that they were not enemies, because they all were working for the country. Students chanted that soldiers should be on their side by calling the soldiers, the "People's army." (Samson 1991, 38).

Old Soldier's song was in ABA form with simple phrasing and rhythm, which suggested that it was relatively easy for people to memorize the song. Lee Gi Bum, who lived in Gwangju during and after the movement, explained that whenever the protest happened in Gwangju, protestors sang *Old Soldier's song* to commemorate it and wanted

to get the spirit of protest from the song. He also explained, “Lots of children lost their fathers during the movement and *Old Soldier’s song* reflect the minds of those whose parents were killed during the movement” (Lee 2009).

Oh, Gwangju, the Cross of the People (1981) by Kim Jun Tae was originally a poem that was published in Jun Nam Times, one of the biggest newspapers in the southwestern region. It was the first poem about May 18th and it was shocking to those people who did not know about the movement, due to different reports of TV, radio, and newspaper. Kim Jun Tae was a teacher from Gwangju High School and he witnessed all things that happened during the May 18 Gwangju movement. The lyrics and score are as follows:

Oh, Gwangju, the cross of the people
 Oh, Gwangju, MuDeung Mountain
 The city of our youth

Where did my father go?
 Where did my mother got killed
 Where did my son got killed and lied down
 Where did my daughter got killed and lied down

God left from Gwangju
 Innocent people fell and arose
 Our bloody city
 We are the phoenix, the undying bird.

No one can take our freedom away

Figure 14: Score of *Oh, Gwangju, the cross of the people*

아 아 광주여 우리나라의 십자가여 아 아 광주여 무등산이여

6
청춘의 도시 아버지는 어디로 갔나 어머니는 어디로 갔나 아들은

12
어디에 파 묻혔나 우리 딸은 어디에 누워있나 하나님도 버린 광주여

16
엎 어 지고 일어 나는 불사조여 우리 자유 떨출 수 없네

The lyrics commemorated the people who sacrificed their lives for May 18 Gwangju movement. For example, “We are the phoenix, the undying bird” suggested that although protestors have died, their spirits still lives on. Moreover, the mournful voice evokes people’s sadness for losing their family members. The rhythms and melodies are irregular throughout the piece, which may have been relatively difficult for the audience to sing the song. This song was sung in a recitative style, which suggests that the singer wanted audiences to listen to, and reflect on the message of poem. In contrast to the music that was used during the May 18 Gwangju movement, *Oh, Gwangju, the Cross of the People* (1981) by Kim Jun Tae was presentational music (a performance that has distinctions between audiences and performers), where the singer wanted to send out the

message to the audiences rather than have the audience learn the song and participate in its performance (Turino 2008, 26). Furthermore, this song was representational music that singers intentionally connected the song to the May 18 Gwangju movement by emphasizing the poem that was written for the movement (see Brown 2008, 4).

The lyrics of *March for My Lady* by Kim Jong Ryul was from Baek Gi Wan's poem that was published in magazine called *Youthful Days* in December, 1980.

According to the liner notes of the CD called *Song of May* that was created by The May 18 Memorial Foundation the poem was about one of the leaders of the May 18 Gwangju movement, Yoon Sang-Won (1950-1980) and his girlfriend (Song of May, 2006).

According to Na Myung Gwan, who worked to distribute *Twosa Hwebo*, Yoon Sang-Won was the first publisher of the newspaper that they published (Na 2009). They were students from the Night School, which was built for those people who had to work in the morning (ibid., 2009). Because they both died in the city hall on the last day of the May 18 Gwangju movement and could not get married, their spirits were married through this poem. The lyrics and music score are as follows:

Love, Honors, and Names are all gone
 The oath to be together
 My friends are all gone
 Let's not shiver until new days
 Although no people will remember you forever, mountains and streams will
 We are leaving now. Survivors, follow me!
 We are leaving now. Survivors, follow me!

Figure 15: Score of *March for My Lady*

임을 위한 행진곡

사 - 랑 도영 - 예 도 이 름 도 남김 없 이 켜
중 - 지 는간 대 없 고 것 - 발 만나 부 켜
한 명 생나 가 자 던 뜨 거 운 행 - 세
새 날 이올 때 까 지 른 들 리 - 지 않 자
세 짝 은 출 러 가 도 산 천 은 안 다
깨 어 나 서 외 지 는 뜨 거 운 항 성
앞 - 서 세나 가 니 산 - 자 여따 르 라
앞 - 서 세나 가 니 산 자 여따 르 라

The last line of the lyrics, “We are leaving now. Survivors, follow me,” were the only lines that were repeated. It suggested that the singer wanted to emphasize the message to protesters to follow Yoon Sang-Won’s path to fight. In contrast to the lyrics of songs that were used during the May 18 Gwangju movement, this set of lyrics was longer and probably harder for people to follow to sing, suggesting that it was meant more as a form of presentational music, to be listened to. This song was also representational music that singers tried to send messages to the people by linking the movement to the song (Brown 2008, 4). Moreover, the song not only used the

instruments that were common for popular songs at that time, such as drums and guitar that were mainly western instruments, but it also used *kkwaenggwari*, a small flat gong used primarily in the folk music of Korea. This suggested that the singer wanted to internationalize the May 18 Gwangju movement by synthesizing Western and Eastern instruments in a song that was composed particularly for a specific movement in South Korea. We could also view it the other way round—because this is a popular song, which itself was already a “global” phenomenon, adding *kkwaenggwari* localized the popular music phenomenon, and drew on global processes at the same time as it affirmed this song as a local Korean (Gwangju) song. An effort to internationalize the May 18 Gwangju movement through *March for My Lady* by Kim Jong Ryul has continued to this day. Lee Gi Bum, a Gwangju protestor, explained, “This song was translated into many languages, such as Chinese, to be used in protest movements in other nations” (Lee 2009).

Popular songs were not the only genres that were composed after the May 18 Gwangju movement. Yun Isang created an orchestra piece to commemorate the May 18 Gwangju movement called *Exemplum in Memorium Kwangju* in 1981 (Figure 16). Yun Isang’s background would help readers to understand the reason he put his effort into making the May 18 Gwangju movement an international event through his piece. Yun Isang was born and raised in South Korea, 1917. He was educated in Japan (1935) and in France (1956). Then Yun moved to West Germany in 1960 with his family and became a

renowned composer. During his stay in Europe, Yun was suspected as a spy from North Korea, and he was kidnapped and jailed by the South Korean secret agent of South Korean president, Park Jung Hee on June 17, 1967. However, Yun Isang was already a famous composer by then and international pressure helped to secure his release in February 1969 (Hong 1988, 132). After the experience of being kidnapped, Yun Isang realized the importance of peace between North and South Korea, as well as peace in the world (ibid., 180). When Yun Isang became aware of the May 18 Gwangju movement after the movement had ended, he decided to compose a symphonic piece (*Exemplum in Memorium Kwangju*) for the movement with a commission from WDR, West German Broadcasting (Jung 2003).

According to Jung Yoo Ha, a researcher of the May 18 Gwangju movement, Yun Isang divided his piece into three parts: massacre (m1-110), sadness for those who sacrificed lives for the movement (m111-170), and hope and future protest for democracy (m171-269) (ibid). In order to analyze Yun Isang's *Exemplum in Memorium Kwangju*, I would like to borrow Yu Siu Wah's interpretation of Tan Dun's *Symphony 1997: Heaven, Earth, Man*, which was composed for the reunification of mainland China and Hong Kong in July, 1997. In Yu's interpretation, Tan Dun synthesized Western and Eastern culture by introducing the new techniques of East Asian instruments for the cello, such as

glissando technique that was frequently used for the Chinese stringed musical instrument, *qin* (Yu 2004, 58).

Figure 16: Score of *Exemplum in Memoriam Kwangju*

EXEMPLUM in memoriam Kwangju Isang Yun (1981)

6 ♩ ca. 60 5
4

6 ♩ ca. 60 5
4

6 ♩ ca. 60 5
4

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Figure 17: Glissando Technique in Yun Isang's *Exemplum in Memoriam Kwangju*

The image shows a musical score for five instruments: Violin 1, Violin 2, Viola, Violoncello, and Kontrabaß. Each instrument part consists of a sequence of four notes: G4, A4, B4, and C5. The notes are marked with an accent (v) and a glissando line (a slanted line above the note). A '6' is written below the notes, indicating a sixteenth note. The score is written in 4/4 time and includes a key signature of one sharp (F#).

Similarly, Yun synthesized Western instruments with Eastern performance style by using the Korean performance technique of atonal variation that was elaborated by glissandos to produce polyphony of the single note with western instruments, such as cello and violin (Ayrey 1984, 435) (Figure 17). Yun Isang not only synthesized Korean performance technique and Western instruments, but also he synthesized Eastern and Western musical style in this piece. For example, from measure 1 to measure 5, the composer indicated that all the instruments were to play the same notes with the same rhythm, which symbolized the Korean traditional musical style of playing in unison. Playing the same notes with same rhythm may be found in the performance of *Aak*, one of the genres of Korean ritual music that is now only performed in the Sacrifice to Confucius Ceremony (Provine 1992, 91). Robert Provine explains, “After the melody

begins each melodic note is of the same duration, and every instrument follows a strictly consistent and orderly procedure” (ibid., 110). By measure 6, Yun Isang divides the different instruments to play in a chordal style, more akin to European western art music (Jung 2003).

Unlike other music that was composed after the May 18 Gwangju movement, *Exemplum in Memorium Kwangju* does not have lyrics. Instead, Yun Isang used melodies to represent scenes from the May 18 Gwangju movement. He divided his piece into three sections (ibid). Measures 1 to 110 symbolize a period of peace in Gwangju to the massacre in Gwangju that was created by Jun Doo Hwan’s military government. Yun started with single notes that symbolized unity, which then turned to blocks of chords that represented chaos. Also, the melody that started with the smallest sound of *ppp* in measure 1 eventually became the loudest sound of *fff* in measure 110. From measure 111 to measure 170, the melodies and rhythms were in a slower tempo compared to the previous measures, a commemoration of those protesters who sacrificed their lives for the movement. From measure 171 until the end of the piece, the melody symbolized victory and hope through the frequent use of trumpets (ibid).

There are some similarities between *Exemplum in Memorium Kwangju* and other music that was composed after the May 18 Gwangju movement were that Yun Isang’s symphony piece is also a form of presentational music, which had a distinction between

audiences and performers. The fact that Yun Isang composed the piece after hearing about the May 18 Gwangju movement suggests that it was representational music, which the composer purposely linked to the political movement (Brown 2008, 4).

Similar to Yun Isang's *Exemplum in Memorium Kwangju* (1981), Tan Dun's *Symphony 1997: Heaven, Earth, Man*, which was composed for the reunification of mainland China and Hong Kong in July, 1997, helped to unify different kinds of politics and helped to internationalize the event. In *Symphony 1997*, Tan Dun used the *Zeng Hou Yi Bell-Chimes*, 65 bronze bells that were excavated in 1978 that symbolized the imperial period of China, with the *Tripod (Ding)*, which was designed by the Hong Kong sculptor that specifically symbolized Hong Kong Administrative Region (Yu 2004, 67). Through this composition, Tan Dun attempted to symbolize the unification of mainland China and Hong Kong by using different instruments that represented different regions in same piece of music. In Tan Dun's piece, *Zeng Hou Yi Bell-Chimes* and the *Tripod* are used with Western instruments, such as cello. Not only did Tan Dun included western instruments along with instruments that represented mainland China and Hong Kong in this East Asian event, but he also introduced new techniques of East Asian instruments for the cello, such as glissando technique that was frequently used for the Chinese stringed musical instrument *qin* (ibid., 58). This suggests that the composer wanted to internationalize his music by synthesizing two different cultures through using Western

(cello) and East Asian instruments (*Zeng Hou Yi Bell-Chimes* and the *Tripod*) and their techniques.

Music that was composed after the May 18 Gwangju movement was different from music that was used during the movement in the sense that it was a device used to send messages to the people about the movement. Music after the movement encouraged deep listening and reflections on the lyrics, which was different from music used during the movement that functioned to exhort active, physical participation. Therefore, music that was used after the movement had relatively complicated lyrics and less-participatory performance style, compared to the music used during the movement. In this way, we may say that musical styles and performance techniques are closely related to musical functions in society. Furthermore, through the music that was composed after the movement, the meaning of the May 18 Gwangju movement changed from a democracy movement of a particular region to a more national and international movement.

Chapter 3: Gwangju Annual Concert

History of the Annual Concert and its Meaning

The annual concert started in May 18, 1995 after The May 18 Memorial Foundation was established in 1994 by family of the participants in the May 18 Gwangju movement. According to Yoon Gwang Jang, a participant in the May 18 Gwangju movement and the current president of the foundation, the purpose of starting the annual concert was to commemorate the May 18 Gwangju movement as well as to teach the younger generation about what had happened in the movement (Yoon 2009). The commemoration events and concerts lasted five days in 2009: May 17 and May 18 for commemoration events including skits and speeches, and May 22, 23, and 24 for annual concerts, body choreography, and presentation of the Gwangju Human Rights Awards that began in 2000.

The annual concerts helped to legitimize the May 18 Gwangju movement and internationalized it relating the movement to international human rights movements. Although there were international symbols during the movement, for instance, by adding local lyrics to tunes borrowed from international movements, such as *Battle Hymn of the Republic*, the annual concerts went a step further. Ming Nin, a representative from Burma, explained, “the May 18 Gwangju movement was an international symbol for demonstrations in other countries, including my country, Burma. I came to Korea to learn

the purpose of demonstrations and how protestors from the May 18 Gwangju movement developed the demonstrations” (Ming, 2009).

Gwangju Annual Concert in 2009

On May 17, 2009, the eve of the 29th year of the May 18 Gwangju movement, the commemoration concert that included skits, music concert, and body choreography began. The opening skit started in front of the city hall, where the conflicts between soldiers and protestors started during the May 18 Gwangju movement. The skit was about a girl who lost her father during the movement. The spirit of the girl’s father along with other spirits could not leave the world because they had grudges and wanted to see their families. The girl met his father’s spirit with the help of an exorcist. All the other spirits worried that people in current days would forget about what had happened in the May 18 Gwangju movement (Figure 18).

Figure 18: The 2009 Gwangju Annual Concert skit



On May 18, 2009, the commemoration started early in the morning at the cemetery of the people who died in the May 18 Gwangju movement. The prime minister of Korea, Jung Woon Chan, delivered a speech about how regionalism between southwestern region and southeastern region should be removed from the Korean peninsula (Jung 2009). In contrast to the blockage of the media during the movement, this speech was broadcasted all over the country. It suggested that the meanings of the May 18 Gwangju movement had changed from the particular regional movement to a nationalistic movement, of which people all over the country were aware. After the speech, the Gwangju Orchestra played *The March for My Lady* and participants of the commemoration event started to sing. The participants of the event knew the lyrics of the song, which suggests that the music was famous enough so that at least the people who

came to the commemoration event knew the lyrics. Yoon Gwang Jang explained, “Most of the songs that were composed after the May 18 Gwangju movement became a symbol of the movement; furthermore, these songs became a symbol for demonstrations all over the country” (Yoon 2009).

On May 22, 2009, the annual concert for the May 18 Gwangju movement began. The concert started with body choreography by a representative from Burma, Ming Nin. Ming came to visit Korea in order to exchange ideas. He called his performance, “Human Rights Performance Art” (Figure 19). He had a statue that seemed to have blood all over its body and Ming started to cut the body of the statue. The statue’s body was filled with white papers and they came out as soon as Ming cut into the body of the statue. Furthermore, he placed a real person that was tied up next to the statue. Ming explained, “The white papers represented truth and purity. By sacrificing their lives, protestors from Burma were reborn as brand new people” (Ming, 2009).

Figure 19: Human Rights Performance Art by Ming Nin in 2009



On May 23 2009, the most famous rock musician in Korea, Ahn Chi Hwan, performed for the May 18 Gwangju movement annual concert (Figure 20). Ahn was famous in Korea for composing and singing anti-governmental songs. His song, *Must*, explained that we must not forget those who have died for demonstrations in Korean history and be harsh on those who used power to put down those demonstrators. The lyrics are as follows:

Do not ask about the past, who said so
 If it were love or parting, I will not ask
 However, however, ah-ha
 Do not forget the past, never forget
 Neither betrayers nor slaughterers deserve forgiveness
 None none none

So many years passed, but the wound doesn't heal up
 As long as they are still enjoying an easy retirement
 So many vindictive spirits with tears wander in the world
 But they hide themselves so well under the wall of power just like the mice
 The weed-like men who lived this epoch like a river
 Who, who will fill hearts streaked through with bruise, hatred, and grief
 No no no

They must be stood in front of the altar of justice
 Must must must

Ahn Chi Hwan used thick vocalization with electrical guitar and drums. Unlike current singers that used an up-do-date microphone that audiences did not recognize, Ahn's used a microphone that fitted into a long stand, which suggested that he preferred tradition. Ahn explained, "I am too old that I prefer rock tradition" (Ahn 2009).

Figure 20: The 2009 Gwangju Annual Concert (Ahn Chi Hwan's Performance)



The content of the lyrics symbolized hatred toward people who used power to kill innocent people. Especially, the text "Neither betrayers nor slaughterers deserve

forgiveness” explained that those people were not worthy of forgiveness. Not only did he sing his songs, but he also chose songs that were composed after the movement and changed them to a rock version. For example, he chose Yang Hee Eun’s *Old Soldier’s Song*, the song that used classical guitar, and transformed it into a rock version by using electric guitar and drums. Ahn’s version of *Old Soldier’s song* was much faster than the original version.

As Ahn’s performance suggested, the lyrics were not the only device designated to send messages to the audience. The tradition of rock music itself had rebellious elements. For example, Spain had to close down the most popular concert hall in Madrid in the late 1960s because the rebellious tone of rock music that frequently played in the concert hall conflicted with the tone of the dictatorship of the Franco regime at that time (Liew 1993, 246). Furthermore, in the U.S., rock and roll music, which was an extension of rhythm and blues before the Vietnam war, was changed to protest music after the war (Brown 2008, 141). By re-making the music of the May 18 Gwangju movement into a rock version, Ahn Chi Hwan legitimized the movement as an international event.

Moreover, the performance context where Ahn sang his own anti-government song with a song about the May 18 Gwangju movement on the same stage suggested that the singer sent messages that legitimized the May 18 Gwangju movement as an international event.

According to VanOosting, studying the performance context that includes the occasion of

the performance, the space of the performance and the status of the performer “examines how to empower the audience to create texts by their performance” (Pelias and VanOosting 1987, 227).

Similar examples of using the performance context to communicate with audiences were *Nueva canción*. *Nueva canción*, or “new song,” was created by combining different Latin American folk traditions with new performance of urban and mass media (Tumans-Serna 1992, 139). *Nueva canción* brought together musical elements and instruments from separate traditions. Not only did this combination represent a cultural unity of the continent (the indigenous, Hispanic and African), but also it was a symbol of Latin-American cultural and political identity in a new generation (Fairley 1985, 309). Due to globalization and modernization, the technology put music into danger of cultural imperialism and cultural colonialism. However, *Nueva canción* retained Latin American folk traditions that the music itself was a sign of the protest against globalization and modernization (ibid., 306).

On May 24, 2009, Shin Young Bok, the famous writer in Korea who stayed in Seoul at the time of the May 18 Gwangju movement, proceeded talk show with the audiences of the annual concert (Figure 21). Shin explained that he did not hear much news about the May 18 Gwangju movement when he stayed in Seoul in 1980. He went on and explained that we needed to do more than remember the movement. He explained,

“We should send out new messages to those people all around the world who might be in same situation as the protestors in May 18 Gwangju movement” (Shin 2009).

Figure 21: The 2009 Gwangju Annual Concert (Shin Young Bok’s Talk Show)



Gwangju Human Rights Award

At the end of the last concert on May 24, 2009, there was a ceremony of Gwangju Human Rights Awards that began in 2000. This award was created to illustrate the spirit of the May 18 Gwangju movement to other countries. According to Yoon Gwang Jang, the current president of The May 18 Memorial Foundation, Gwangju wanted to show that they were supporting peaceful demonstrations in other nations by awarding people who contributed their lives to those demonstrations (Yoon 2009). Based

on the recommendation of candidates for Gwangju Human Rights Award, ordinary citizens had the right to vote.

There were people around the world who were awarded the Gwangju Human Rights Awards. The first person who was awarded in 2000 was Sanana Gusmao the president from East Timor. The reason why Sanana was awarded was that although he was the leader of the guerilla power, he tried to reject terrorism and wanted peace in his country. The award winner in 2001 was Basil Fernando, who was born in Sri Lanka and became the chairman of the Asian Human Rights Commission. He published the journal called, *Human Rights Solidarity*. Also he published *Gwangju: Model for Democracy Movement* that helped the May 18 Gwangju movement to become an international movement. In 2002, Cho Chan Bae, the president of the organization of people who died from the May 18 Gwangju movement was the winner. He put forth efforts to pass a law to establish the rights of those who lost their lives from the May 18 Gwangju movement. In 2003, the award was granted to Dandanya Jayanti, the Chairman of missing people in Sri Lanka. She led the human rights movement in Sri Lanka.

Ahwoongsang from Burma was awarded the 2004 Gwangju Human Rights Award for being the leader of protesters for democracy. She was inspired by Martin Luther King Jr.'s peaceful protest without violence. In 2005, Wardah Hafidz, the leader of Urban Poor Consortium in Indonesia, was honored for upholding equality of men and

women in her country. In 2006, two leaders were awarded for Gwangju Human Rights Award. Malalai Joy was a woman politician from Afghanistan. She tried to establish education for Afghanistan women. Angkhana Neelaphaijit from Thailand was another winner. She helped to establish the human rights movement in Thailand along with her husband, who had passed away in the movement.

Irom Chanu Sharmila, who was founder of People's Enquiry Commission in India that investigated human rights violations, was awarded the 2007 Gwangju Human Rights Award. In 2008, Muneer A. Maik, who was part of the Pakistan Supreme Court Bar Association, was awarded the Gwangju Human Rights Award. He was one of the leaders for the democratic movement against Zia ul Haq's military government. Min Ko Naing was the winner of the 2009 Gwangju Human Rights Award. He established the All Burma Federation of Student Unions to participate in demonstration against military government in Burma. The Gwangju Human Rights Award not only gave support to protestors who worked for human rights movements around the world, but also legitimized and changed the meaning of the May 18 Gwangju movement to international sense.

The 2009 Gwangju Annual Concert helped the music of the May 18 Gwangju movement change meaning from music from a particular southwestern music and Korean popular music to music that symbolized the international human rights movement.

Fairley explained, “The music and song of such a tradition is defined as much by who is singing it, to whom, where and when, as by important considerations of content and form, theme and language, poetry and symbol, instrumentation and arrangement, melody, rhythm, harmony, tempo, and timbre” (Fairley 1985, 308). The fact that singers performed the music of the May 18 Gwangju movement along with human rights performance artist from different countries and the Gwangju Human Rights Award ceremony legitimized the movement as an international movement.

Conclusion

During my field research in Gwangju 2009, the interviewees, who were participants in the May 18 Gwangju movement, were not aware of the significance of the music in the movement. When I asked them about the significance of music that they used during the movement and music that was composed after the movement, most of them simply answered, “I am not sure, but maybe it helped people to unify for the movement.” The participants knew what kind of music was used for the May 18 Gwangju movement, but they did not know what that music represented.

After analyzing the music that was used during and after the May 18 Gwangju movement and comparing it to music from other movements as well as to theories of music and politics, I have shown that the significance of the music was more than just “unifying” people. Music was a device for one group to communicate with others, such as a group of protesters to communicate with the system (government) or a group of performers to communicate with audiences.

The music of the May 18 Gwangju movement and its meanings changed depending on the different contexts, such as time, place, and people. Various techniques were used in changing the meaning of the music, such as the use of different lyrics and performance styles. An example of the changing of lyrics to the same tune was the use of *Battle Hymn of the Republic* during the May 18 Gwangju movement. The fact that

different people added different lyrics for the different movements changed the meaning of the music to fit into the movement. For example, although *Get Away Jun Doo Hwan* and *Seeing Red* were based on the same tune, their lyrics were added by different people to fit into different movements. Thus, the meanings and values of these songs were different.

Putting different meaning to the music by changing the lyrics was an example of associational music, in contrast to representational music, which involved the linking of politics and music without the composers' intentions. Furthermore, the different performance styles helped to change the meaning of the music. Yang Hee Eun's *Old Soldier's Song* was used right after the May 18 Gwangju movement to nationalize the movement. However, the same music helped to legitimize the movement into an international movement when Ahn Chi Hwan performed it in the rock music style.

Music that was used during the May 18 Gwangju movement was music where leaders of the movement created new meaning to preexisting music. The leaders wanted to use music from different backgrounds, including national songs and international tunes, to symbolize the Gwangju democratic movement as both regionally specific and internationally relevant.

Music that was used during the May 18 Gwangju movement was similar to the idea of politicized *p'ungmul* in 1980s in terms of politicizing and associating music that

had nothing to do with politics to the political movement. The original concept of *p'ungmul* was the traditional genre of percussion music performed by farmers in Korea. However, the idea of *minjung*, the masses, politicized *p'ungmul* in 1970s and 1980s.

According to Abelmann, *minjung* was “both a political prism and the regnant narrative of dissent” (Abelmann 1996, 7). The concept of *minjung* helped people to re-examine movements that had happened in previous periods of history. People started to imagine the role of the protesters in their history. Abelmann further explained, “in the South Korean community of dissent, memory was imagined as a personal resource or collective repository that could mobilize people” (ibid., 21). One way of practicing *minjung* was by practicing the folk music that symbolized common people in Korean history. *P'ungmul* is regarded by Koreans, and by the international community, as a representative of folk music in Korean history, and a link was established between the concept of *minjung* and *p'ungmul* (politicized *p'ungmul*) (Lee 2003, 563). The collective action notion of *minjung* and the folk music concept of *p'ungmul* were combined together so that protesters in 1980s, including the May 18 Gwangju movement, began to use these two concepts for the protest movement.⁴

Music that was composed after the movement was music that people created to nationalize the May 18 Gwangju movement from an event of a particular region. The

⁴ For more information on *p'ungmul*, see Hesselink (2006).

lyrics indicated the movement directly. An example was *Oh, Gwangju, the Cross of the People* (1981) by Kim Jun Tae, which was particularly designated to the movement and commemorated those people who sacrificed their lives to the movement. The performance style for music after the movement was in a presentational form, in that it was meant to be performed for an audience. Performers wrote more complicated lyrics compared to the music that was used during May 18 Gwangju movement itself. This suggests that performers wanted the audience to “participate” in the spirit of the movement by listening and reflecting on the lyrics. For instance, in *Oh, Gwangju, the Cross of the People*, Kim Jun Tae used a recitative form that had a relatively simple rhythm and melodies so that the audience was able to concentrate on the lyrics and the messages sent by the performer.

The meaning of music that was performed at the annual concerts for the May 18 Gwangju movement changed the meaning of Gwangju songs mainly through the use of different performance styles. Yang Hee Eun’s *Old Soldier’s Song* was changed to a rock version by Ahn Chi Hwan. Since rock music as a genre itself is perceived to contain rebellious elements worldwide, by changing the performance style of the song, the May 18 Gwangju movement was simultaneously internationalized. In addition to music, artistic presentations on the theme of human rights, as well as the establishment of the

Gwangju Human Rights Award, helped sustain the Gwangju movement as an international icon.

The role of music in realizing the May 18 Gwangju movement was more significant than any other form of media. While all other forms of media were controlled by Jun Doo Hwan's government in 1980 and could not justifiably comment on what happened during the movement, the performance of songs and music helped to legitimize the May 18 Gwangju movement during and after the event. As the meanings and values of music changed depending upon time, place, and people, the meanings and significance of the movement also changed. Specifically, music played a significant role in propelling the May 18 Gwangju movement, a movement from a particular region, to a nationally and internationally known movement.

Glossary

Aak- a genre of Korean ritual music that is now performed only in the Sacrifice to Confucius Ceremony.

A-mei- Taiwanese pop diva who sang the Republic of China's national anthem for Chen Shui-Bian's Presidential Inauguration Ceremony on May 20th, 2000.

Baekje(18BCE-660 CE)- one of the Three Kingdoms of Korea and it was located in the southwestern region of Korea. At its peak in the 4th century, Baekje controlled some colonies in China and most of the western Korean Peninsula. It was defeated by Silla and Tang alliance in 660 CE.

Choi Gyu-Ha (1919-2006)- the president of South Korea between 1979 and 1980. After the assassination of Park Jung Hee in 1979, Choi was the prime minister of South Korea that assumed power. In December 1979, Jun Doo Hwan's military regime took over Choi's government with military coup.

Cui Jian- a Chinese rock musician. His *yaogun yinyue* had a rough vocal style with lyrics that had politically oppositional content. Students from the Tiananmen incident used his songs to protest against the government.

Dong-A Il Bo (Dong-A Times)- one of the biggest newspaper publishers that was controlled by Jun Doo Hwan's government at the time of the May 18 Gwangju movement. It published manipulated reports on May 27th 1980.

Goguryo(37BCE-668CE)- an ancient Korean kingdom located in present day northern and central parts of the Korean Peninsula, southern Manchuria, and the southern Russian Maritime province. Goguryo was one of the Three Kingdoms of Korea along with Baekje and Silla. It was defeated by a Silla-Tang alliance in 668 CE.

Goryeo (918-1392) - a Korean sovereign state established in 918 by Emperor Taejo. It lasted until the Later Three Kingdom in 936 and ruled most of the Korean peninsula until it was removed by the Joseon dynasty in 1392. Goryeo expanded its borders to almost the whole of the Korean peninsula in 1374.

Gwangju Human Rights Award- an award created to distribute spirits of the May 18 Gwangju movement to demonstrations in other countries since 2000. It was sponsored by The May 18 Memorial Foundation.

Jindo arirang- a traditional folksong from the southwestern part of Korea that was used during the May 18 Gwangju movement.

Jun Doo Hwan (b. 1931)- the president of South Korea (1980-1981 and 1981-1988).

After the assassination of Park Jung Hee in 1979, Jun took over Choi Gyu-Ha's government that was resumed after the assassination. As students from Gwangju started to protest against his government, Jun sent his soldiers in and a big massacre occurred.

Jun Nam University- One of the big universities in the southwestern region of Korea. It is where students initiated the May 18 Gwangju movement on May 18 1980 for support for democracy.

Kim Dae Jung (1924-2009)- the president of South Korea between 1998 and 2003. He wanted democratic government against Park Jun Hee and Jun Doo Hwan's military regime. He was tortured several times. He was supported by the southwestern region, where Gwangju was located.

Kkwaenggwari- a small flat gong used primarily in folk music of Korea. It was high-pitched and made of brass. It is played with a hard stick.

Later Baekje (892-936)- one of the Later Three Kingdoms of Korea. It sought to establish itself as the successor to the ancient kingdom of Baekje (18BCE-660CE). It was located in the southwestern region of Korean Peninsula. Wang Geon (founder of Goryeo) openly prohibited the hiring of people from the territory of Later Baekje.

Michael Quin (1896-1950)- used *Battle Hymn of the Republic* to create a communist anthem in 1936 for a May Day celebration in “*Seeing Red.*”

Nueva canción- Spanish for ‘new song.’ It is a movement in Latin American music that was developed in South America, especially Chile, during the 1950s and 1960s. It combined traditional Latin American folk music with new performance of urban and mass media.

Park Jung Hee (1917-1979)- the President of South Korea between 1963 and 1979. He was respected for industrialization of the Republic of Korea through export-led growth. However, he was criticized for his authoritarian way of ruling after 1971. He was assassinated in 1979.

Qin- a plucked seven-string Chinese musical instrument.

Ralph Chaplin (1887-1961)- an Industrial Workers of the World organizer, who wrote militant lyrics to *Battle Hymn of the Republic* and produced *Solidarity Forever*.

Silla (57BC-935AD) - one of the Three Kingdoms of Korea. It allied itself with China and conquered the other two kingdoms, Baekje in 660 and Goguryeo in 668. It occupied most of the Korean Peninsula until Goryeo took power.

Three Kingdom era (18 BC- 668CE)- the ancient Korean kingdoms of Goguryeo, Baekje, and Silla, which dominated the Korean Peninsula and part of Manchuria. It lasted until Silla's triumph in 668 CE.

Tiananmen incident- a democratic movement in China that was initiated on June 4th, 1989. Similar to the May 18 Gwangju movement, it was a movement that was started by college students. The students wanted to talk to the government in order to make some changes, but they supported communism.

Tripod (Ding)- Tribute metal presented by the governors of Nine Provinces of ancient China during Xia Dynasty (2200BCE). In Tan Dun's *Symphony 1997: Heaven, Earth, Man*, Tan Dun used sculpture that specifically symbolized Hong Kong Administrative Region.

Twosa Hwebo- Warrior Times that the leaders of the May 18 Gwangju movement published. Due to media blockage, other forms of newspaper reported manipulated stories that the leaders of the movement wanted to publish what really happened in the movement. It also explained what citizens ought to do against Jun Doo Hwan's military regime.

Wang Geon (877-943)- the founder of Goryeo Dynasty, which ruled Korea from the 10th to the 14th century. He did not like people from Baekje after the long war with Baekje in 927. He had a prejudice against people from Baekje and he prevented them from holding government positions.

Yoon Sang-Won (1950-1980)- the first publisher of *Twosa Hwebo* (Warrior Times). He was a student from Night School. *March for My Lady*, the song that was composed after the May 18 Gwangju movement, was composed after he and his girlfriend.

Yun Isang (1917-1995)- a composer who created “Exemplum in Memorium Kwangju” in 1981. It was first symphonic piece that was written for the May 18 Gwangju movement. He synthesized Eastern and Western elements in his piece.

Zeng Hou Yi Bell-Chimes- 65 bronze bells that Tan Dun used in his *Symphony 1997: Heaven, Earth, Man*. It was excavated in 1978, which symbolized the imperial period of China.

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