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THE PIANO AND DECENTRED CULTURAL MODERNITY IN KOREA: SHADES OF CHOPIN[1]

The global prominence of Korean pianists today[2] is an outcome of the history of an active take-up of piano and organ from the time of the modern Korean Empire in the late nineteenth century, associated with missionary activity and the establishment of mission schools. Enthusiasm for the piano and its music continued to grow during the period of Japanese rule, and blossomed in the post-liberation era.

This paper will sketch the history of the piano in Korea from its introduction around 1900 to 1945, looking specifically for signs of Chopin, arguably the composer most emblematic of piano music, and will explore the significance the piano held for those aspiring to modernity during that time.[3] It will not only *decentre* European narratives of piano and modernity,[4] but will also try to relativise 'triumphalist narratives' of the reception of Western music in Korea,[5] in which an individual nation is seen to master Western music, an approach that smacks of colonial mimicry and invokes a sense of competition with rival nations. Instead, I view the piano in Korea as part of a 'transnational history to replace the modern nationalist historiography' by showing the intra-regional character of a piano culture in East Asia at the time and tracing its overlapping histories.

The broad factors behind the growth of Western classical music in Korea, as in other East Asian settings, include military bands (Franz Eckert in Japan, then Korea, developed military music, which led to the growth of orchestras), churches and mission schools, and the centrality of 'school songs' in public music education (which laid the foundation for group singing and led to patriotic singing and hybrid popular music). These were common paths to musical modernity in the region. The piano was particularly important to the domestic life of

1
In this paper, Korean and Japanese family names are stated first, followed by given names. For Korean spelling, as far as possible, the Official Korean Language Romanisation system introduced by the South Korean Government in 2000 is used, with the exception of common names such as Kim, Ahn and Lee, as well as commonly transliterated names of institutions: Sungshil (not Sungsil), Ewha (not Ehwa) and Yonhee (not Yonhui). Seoul was called Kyeongsong (Kr.) / Keijō (Jp.) in the colonial period, and the two names are sometimes used interchangeably in this essay. Likewise, the name of (colonial-era) Korea is given in sources as Choseon/Joseon (Kr.) and Chōsen (Jp.). Korean and Japanese pronunciation of a vast shared Sino–Japanese terminology is distinct.

2
Korean prize-winners in the Chopin Competition are the brothers Donghyeok and Dongmin Lim (equal third in 2005); Seongjin Cho took first place in 2015. As regards Chinese pianists, Fou Ts'ong took third place in 1955, and in 2000 Yundi Li won first prize. Japanese contestants took second place in 1970 (Uchida Mitsuko), third place in 1990 (Yuko Yokoyama) and equal second in 2021 (Kyohei Sorita). Japanese pianists first entered the Competition in 1937, when Hara Chieko (1914–2001) won the audience prize. The other contestant was Kai Miwa (1913–2011). See the article by Junichi Tada in this issue.

3
Kim Mihyun makes a strong case for the piano as a symbol of modernity in colonial Korea. See 'Piano wa geundae: chogi Hanguk piano eumak wi sahoesa' [The piano and modernity], *Hanguk eumakhak hakhoe*, 19 (2010), 153–187.

4
Tobias Janz and Chien-Chang Yang, *Decentering Musical Modernity: Perspectives on East Asian and European Music History* (Bielefeld: transcript, 2019).

5
Such as Choong-sik Ahn, *The Story of Western Music in Korea: A Social History, 1885–1950* (eBookstand Books, 2005).

expatriate communities, both Japanese and missionaries, and had a great influence on the host community.[6]

Korea's piano culture developed within an entangled complex of nationalism, colonialism and modernity,[7] in the overlapping domains of Korean nationalism, missionary activity and Japanese rule. There were two reference points for musicians in colonial Korea with corresponding institutions and infrastructures: missionaries and mission schools that provided a milieu of 'Christian modernity', and Japan with its colonial modernity. Missionaries found support among Korean elites who wanted 'reform from within', rather than proactive resistance. Choi documents the symbiotic relationship between missionary evangelising and Koreans, developing the concept of 'Christian modernity', and further reveals the gendered nature of this modernity, not least in the growth of a piano culture.[8] The only alternative to cosying up to one or both of these was national independence, activism and exile. These entanglements played out in the careers and lives of Korean pianists in various ways.

The contribution of the Japanese community to the development of a Western musical culture in Korea can be gleaned from the pages of the *Keijō Nippō* (Kyeongsong Ilbo, Seoul Daily News), a Japanese-language newspaper. It reports on performances by visiting international celebrities and visiting Japanese musicians, revealing the presence of traditional Japanese music and musicians, as well as Japanese Western musical activities. It also discusses music stores, support for Korean traditional music, music societies and networks, school music concerts, the construction of modern facilities, and the official patronage of visiting international musicians. Discourses about the importance of Western music in modern life are also presented. The same is found on the pages of the Korean-language *Maeil Shinbo* (Daily News), another mouthpiece of the Japanese Government-General colonial administration.[9]

A different image of the piano in Korea emerges from the Korean-language newspapers *Donga Ilbo* and *Choseon Ilbo*.[10] They give a vivid picture of a nascent local music culture, one that was not merely mediated by Japan. They document the musical life of Korean society, reporting on public concerts given by local pianists and revealing a vibrant musical culture of musicians trained in Korea and abroad. Significantly, both Japanese- and Korean-language newspapers sponsored concerts and actively promoted them on their pages.

Missionary activity and the piano in Korea

Korea opened its doors in 1876, a direct result of the Treaty of Kanghwa with Japan. Missionaries started arriving in Korea from 1885, bringing reed organs for use in worship and in the schools

6
There is no evidence for an enclave of resident Jewish and other European refugee musicians, such as were prominent in China (Shanghai, Harbin, etc.), and on a smaller scale in Japan.

7
Gi-Wook Shin and Michael E. Robinson (eds.), *Colonial Modernity in Korea* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 1999).

8
Hyaeweol Choi, *Gender and Mission Encounters in Korea New Women, Old Ways* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009).

9
Alison Tokita, 'Piano and Modernity in Korea', unpublished conference paper at the VI International Congress of Korean Studies (Seoul: Academy of Korean Studies, 30 September 2012).

10
https://newslibrary.naver.com/.

they founded. Organs and accordions were the first instruments learned from the missionaries by many Koreans. Some missionaries owned organs personally and taught converts privately. After the Japanese annexation (effectively colonisation) in 1910, formal music education requiring keyboard instruments was established in schools. At Japanese-run schools and Korean-managed private schools alike, students were taught singing. Eventually, at least one reed organ was a fixture in most schools and colleges.

The first pianos are documented from around 1900, imported for domestic use by foreign diplomats and merchants, as well as by missionaries. In the colonial period, the piano remained the domain of a privileged elite: 'Western music became the symbol of the prestigious class'.[11]

During the colonial period, the number of pianos increased in all sectors, with many Japanese colonists owning pianos for home music-making. When the Japanese withdrew, in 1945, their pianos were acquired by Koreans, though the Korean War (1950–1953) led to the destruction of many instruments. Piano manufacture in Korea began in the 1950s.[12] From the 1960s, as the piano became universally popular, its growth paralleling the country's rapid economic expansion, Korea's export of pianos rivalled that of Japan, especially so from the 1990s.

The piano in Korea was inseparable from missionary work and mission school education. As islands of Western culture in colonial Korea, the mission schools were a key factor in the dissemination of keyboard music. These schools had a near-monopoly on serious music education, the most important ones being Sungshil in Pyongyang (up to secondary level) and two establishments in Seoul: Ewha Girls School (established in 1885 by Mary Scranton, with college level from 1910; this was the precursor of Ewha Womans [*sic*] University), and Yonhee Men's College (founded by Horace Underwood in 1915; the precursor of Yonsei University).[13] Virtually all Korean pianists first trained in these mission schools, and then went to Japan, or in some cases to America, for Europe was a destination only the very rich could afford. Those who went to America and Europe had usually studied in Japan first.

Many of the missionaries and teachers at mission schools were accomplished amateur- and even professional-level musicians. They enjoyed extensive missionary networks in East Asia, and often facilitated study abroad for their music students in both Japan and America. Japan was the most common destination, because of its proximity and relative affordability, despite the drawbacks of colonial status in the hierarchy and feelings of resentment.

Although the music department of Sungshil in Pyongyang mainly conducted musical activities for the purpose of missionary work, it played an important role in establishing Western music in Korea. From 1909 the Sungshil Music Department was invigorated by Dr E. M. Mowry, a missionary whose speciality was chemistry.

11
SetByol Choi, 'High-class Women and Cultural Capital in Consolidating High-Class Boundary: Korean Case: Females Majoring in Western Classic Music', PhD thesis, Yale University, 1999, 52.

12
Wan Kyu Chung, 'An analysis and evaluation of beginning piano methods used in Korea', PhD thesis, Texas Tech University, 1992, 65–67.

13
See Ahn, *The Story of Western Music in Korea*, *passim*.

He set up a choir and a hymn group, a girls' choir and a brass band to expand the base of Western music. His wife contributed significantly with piano and general musical education. Thanks to Mowry's tutelage, many of the individuals who became big names in Korean music received their initial musical training at Sungshil, including Pak Kyeongho, Ahn Ik-tae (1906–1965), Hyeon Je-myung (1903–1960), who studied in America, Kim Se-hyeong (1904–1999) and Kim Dong-jin, who studied in Japan.[14]

Mowry sheltered Ahn Ik-tae from the police in 1919, and sent him secretly to Japan, where he stayed for ten years supported by his brother, studying music at Tokyo Higher College of Music / Tōkyō Kōtō Ongaku Gakuin (established in 1926; in 1947 it became Kunitachi College of Music / Kunitachi Ongaku Daigaku). His later years were spent outside Korea, and his activities included composing a new melody for the Korean national anthem in California, and premiering a symphonic poem about Korea's modern era in Dublin, with the Irish Symphony Orchestra, in 1936. He was active as a conductor and composer in Nazi Germany.[15]

Kye Jeong-sik (1904–1974) was also from Sungshil. The son of a pastor from Pyongyang, he learned violin from a German-born American teacher there. In Tokyo he studied music and German at Tōyō Music School (established in 1907 by Suzuki Yonejirō; now Tokyo College of Music), learning violin with the Imperial Household musician Ono Tadasuke. He then studied in Germany (Würzburg) from 1923 and earned a doctorate in music from the University of Basel in 1930. Returning to Korea in 1935, he was active as an influential music critic for *Choseon Ilbo*, as well as in solo and ensemble performance.[16]

Privately-run Korean schools were founded, but they did not educate girls, whereas missionaries encouraged women's education: 'mission schools satisfied Koreans' growing interest in women's education in the absence of Korean schools'.[17] The symbiotic relationship between missionary evangelising through the promotion of education for girls and the Korean desire to build a modern independent state played out in various forms.[18] Most notable was the role of Ewha Girls School.

Ewha professor Mrs F. E. Boots, the wife of a dentist then living in Seoul, was a violinist and conductor trained at the University of Pittsburgh. In 1926 she set up the chamber orchestra Chung-ang Akwuhuei (Jp. Chūō Gakuyūkai),[19] comprising both professional and amateur players. She used her connections in Japan to send the violinist Ahn Byeongso (1910–1979) to study with Eugen Klein in Kobe in 1930.[20] Klein waived his fees, got Ahn a job teaching violin at a school for foreign students, and arranged a string quartet to raise money for him to study in America (though he actually went to Germany instead). Another musical missionary, Mary E. Young, came to Korea in 1920 to teach music theory at Ewha.[21] She expanded the music department by recruiting some talented local musicians

14
Kim Mihyun, 'The piano and modernity', 160–161.

15
Ahn, *The Story of Western Music in Korea*, 94–95; Frank Hoffmann, 'Berlin Koreans and Pictured Koreans', in Andreas Schirmer (ed.), *Koreans and Central Europeans: Informal Contacts up to 1950* (Vienna: Praesens, 2015), 9–179; Lee Kyungboon, 'Bereullin wi Hanguk yuhaksaeng yeongu: An Byeongso wa Lee Aenae rul jungsimeuro' [A study of Korean music students in Berlin: Ahn Byeongso and Lee Aenae], *Umakhak*, 39 (2018), 41–77.

16
Ahn, *The Story of Western Music in Korea*, 44.

17
Choi, *Gender and Mission*, 93.

18
Ibid.

19
Ahn, *The Story of Western Music in Korea*, 77.

20
Eugen Klein (1893–1942) came from a Russian family of musicians and graduated from the Moscow Conservatory. He came to Japan in 1926 after performing in Harbin. Besides performing as a soloist, he occasionally conducted the Takarazuka Symphony Orchestra. He married the Japanese soprano Kitazawa Eiko. See Margaret Mehl, Appendix (notbylovealone.com)

to the staff, and was one of the many missionaries who on occasion strategically collaborated with the Japanese colonial authorities.

The prominence of professional women pianists in colonial Korea can be attributed to the Ewha school. In 1925 a specialist music department was established, where women could be trained to professional level, whereas aspiring male musicians had to study abroad. Respectable women in premodern Korea did not perform in public. With modernisation, however, a large number of female pianists emerged, several of whom studied abroad, including in the United States: Yun Seong-deok (Northwestern University, Chicago), Ko Bong-kyung (Wesleyan School of Music), Kim Mary (University of Michigan) and Kim Yeongui (Juilliard Conservatory).[22] Most had attended Christian mission schools or were from Christian families. The fact that those who were able to study in the United States were recommended and supported by American missionaries shows that Christianity became a strong motive for Korean female musicians in poor circumstances to reach beyond traditional notions of women's status in music. Compared with Japan, the influence of Christianity in colonial Korea was profound, particularly in the relationship between female musicians and Christianity. Thus, the relationship between Western music (*viz* modernisation) and Christianity and female musicians is intricately intertwined.[23]

From Christian modernity to colonial modernity: Japan as the conduit for a piano culture in Korea

Robinson notes that Japan imposed modernity on Korea in the form of Western modern institutions, including music education,[24] and Atkins sees this as calculated cultural control.[25] It is possible to see both negative and positive aspects of the Japanese influence on music during the colonial period. We should again stress that Korea was not completely isolated musically, but formed one link in the regional contact networks that characterised East Asia at that time.

Japan played a significant role in the dissemination of Western music culture, although the nature of the interaction between the Japanese and Korean musical communities was uneasy and fraught with resentment. Korean elites were co-opted into the Japanese administration, especially after the new Culture Policy of 1920. Wells calls this 'incipient collaboration'.[26] However, for aspiring Korean musicians, what was later castigated as collaboration was the means to acquire cultural capital, as well as status, in the colonial society. They had to rely on institutions and infrastructures provided by either missionaries, or Japanese colonisers, or both. This combination became more constricting in the late 1930s and into the 1940s. The most egregious example was that of the tenor and composer Hyun Jemyoung (1903–1960), who, after studying at the Gunn Music School in Chicago (1926–1929), had a distinguished

21
Her Korean name was Miri Yeong. She was a Methodist missionary. She conducted the choir of Jeongdong Church and was interested in Korean traditional music, and she also included Korean folksongs in the Ewha music curriculum. See Jeon Inpyeong, 'Hanguk piano-kye wi Gaecheokjadeul' [Pioneers of the Korean piano world], *Journal of the Society for Korean Music Philology*, 12 (2021), 107–142. See also Ahn, *The Story of Western Music in Korea*, 46.

22
Kim Mihyun, 'The piano and modernity', 167.

23
Lee Kyungboon, 'Korean Music Students in Berlin', 61.

24
Michael E Robinson, *Korea's Twentieth-Century Odyssey* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2007).

25
E. Taylor Atkins, *Primitive Selves: Koreana in the Japanese Colonial Gaze, 1910–1945* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010).

26
Kenneth M. Wells, *New God, New Nation: Protestants and Self-reconstruction Nationalism in Korea, 1896–1937* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1990).

career as a singer and composer, and was in fact a highly politicised musician.[27] Others, such as violinist Ahn Beongso and tenor Ahn Giyeong, were active in the Japanese puppet state of Manchuria.[28] They were able to develop their musicianship and musical activity under Japanese auspices. However, they suffered a posthumous backlash and were labelled collaborators. Many musicians were among the hundreds who were blacklisted in 2005,[29] while those who defected to North Korea after 1948 were banned in South Korea until the Seoul Olympics in 1988.

The Korean stance on Japanese influence is overwhelmingly negative. Exceptionally, Lee Kyungboon asks for the abandonment of a dichotomous stance that pits Japan against Korea, and Communist against anti-Communist. An anti-Japanese stance fails to apprehend the contribution of Japan, and the labelling of musicians active in the colonial period as collaborators denies their musical contribution. It is really an attempt to write the history of Korean modern music without any Japanese input, or to see that input as entirely nefarious and counter-productive. An anti-Communist stance led to the banning of musicians who settled in North Korea, and their music remains relatively unknown in the South. Furthermore, there is little research into those musicians, due largely to difficulty of access and the paucity of extant materials following purges in the North.[30]

The Japanese and their musical life in Korea: from model to occupying power

Japan formally occupied Korea from 1910 to 1945. Already in the 1880s and 1890s Japan had been a model of modernisation and independence, but it increasingly came to be viewed as a threat to Korean independence.

Like the British and others in Shanghai and the French in Vietnam, the Japanese brought with them to Korea their own musical culture, including Western music, traditional Japanese music, and popular music. It was part of their public and private life. A piano culture in Korea was fostered by Japanese colonial culture, since for the Japanese ruling class the piano was already part of Japan's by then westernised elite culture. The wives of administrators who had graduated from Tokyo Music School and other institutions contributed actively to the local music culture.

Tokyo Music School's Alumni Association (Dōseikai) in Keijō was important because it united Japanese and Korean returnees, such as Kim Yongwhan. However, according to Min Kyungchan (personal communication, 21-2-2009), only a handful of Koreans studied at Tokyo Music School; most went to Tokyo Higher College of Music (Kunitachi), and many to the Musashino and Tōyō music schools.

27
Noh Dong-Eun, 'Jeguk wi eumakka, Hyeon Je-myeong yeongu' [Musician of the empire: Je-Myoung Hyun], *Eumakhak*, 20 (2011), 169–222. Hyun gained social status as a prominent tenor, composer and educator. Early in his career, he used his singing in evangelism, but after his appointment to Yonhee School as a professional musician, he became the preeminent figure in the musical world, especially through music associations and societies. From 1937 he was closely connected to the colonial government and in effect worked to implement Japanese imperialist policies through music. After 1945 he changed his allegiance to the US military occupying forces, abandoning his Japanese name (Kuroyama Sumiaki) and adopting an American name, Rody Hyun.

28
Ahn Giyeong (1900–1980), who lived in Nanjing from 1919 to 1924, later took his lover to Harbin, Shanghai and Tokyo in a kind of moral exile. See Ahn, *The Story of Western Music in Korea*, 46–47 and 129–131.

29
A compendium of over 4,000 pro-Japanese collaborators was published in Kyeongro Yun et al. (eds) *Chin'il inmyeong sajeon* [Pro-Japanese biographical dictionary] (Seoul: Minjok Munjae Yeonguso, 2009), a who's who of pro-Japanese collaborators. The forty-three musicians among them included Kye Jeongsik, Kim Dongjin, Kim Seontae, Kim Weonbok, Pak Kyeongho, Ahn Iktae, Cho Dunam, Hyun Jaemyong and Hong Nanpa.

30
Lee Kyungboon, 'Hanguk geundae eumaksa reul bo nun sam kaji siseon' [Three perspectives for a new approach to Korean modern music history], *Eumak gwa munhwa*, 41 (2019), 27–47.

The violinist Ueno Hisako, a graduate of Tokyo Music School, lived in Seoul as the wife of Ueno Naoteru (1882–1973), professor of aesthetics and philosophy at the Keijō Imperial University (established in 1924). She played violin in some of the concerts given by the visiting contralto Yanagi Kaneko and took a leading role in setting up a university orchestra in 1926.[31] Ōba Yūnosuke, a violinist who taught music at the First Girls' High School, also graduated from Tokyo Music School.

The principal and most obvious influence of Japan on the development of music in colonial Korea was the formal school music education, which consisted mainly of singing school songs (*changga*; Jp. *shōka*) in the 1920s and 1930s.[32] The 1906 system included music as a policy, but it was hard to implement due to lack of resources. However, by the 1920s, reports of school concerts were regularly featured on the pages of Japanese- and Korean-language newspapers. The *Keijō Nippō* on 8-10-1928 (p. 2) gives a brief report of a ceremony in the Frei Hall at Ewha School with a speech by Governor-General Saitō, to commemorate and pay tribute to the late Mr Frei, who established the hall, an example of Mary Young's ability to gain the cooperation of the colonial authorities. On 27-11-1923 (p. 4) there is a photograph and brief report about a music concert at the First Girls' High School. On 23-12-1923 (p. 5) there is an article about a girls' opera showcase (Shōjo kageki taikai).

Min Kyungchan believes that Japanese piano teaching methods had a deleterious effect on the post-war piano culture; it was difficult to shake off the pattern of rigorous training through Beyer and Czerny (Chung clearly demonstrates the ongoing influence of Beyer in Korea).[33] Chung also argues that a vacuum was left in musical life after the Japanese withdrew.

Kim Jiesun points out that Japan contributed to the diffusion of classical music in Korea through music education, principally the singing of school songs, especially as experienced by colonial subjects who attended schools for Japanese residents. This education provided a basic knowledge of Western music and a foundation for the appreciation of public concerts.

Drawing on the Korean-language newspaper *Maeil shinbo*, which functioned as the mouthpiece of the Government-General, Kim Jiesun documents the concert activity of visiting Japanese musicians, showing that vocal music dominated. While such concerts were primarily for the Japanese community, they were attended also by elite Koreans who could afford the tickets.[34] Interestingly, the performances of Yanagi Kaneko, wife of the proponent of Korean folk art, Yanagi Sōetsu, were sponsored by Korean organisations and were patronised substantially by Koreans. Her concerts were documented in the Korean newspapers, unlike concerts by other visiting artists.

Lee Kyungboon stresses the elite nature of Western classical music in the colonial context, where concert audiences were

31
Ko Insuk, 'Yanagi Kaneko kōen katsudō to Chōsen ni okeru mingei undō' [Yanagi Kaneko's performance work and the Mingei [national art] movement in colonial Korea], *Kyushu Daigaku Daigakuin Kyōiku Kenkyū Kiyō*, 7 (2004), 51–67.

32
Min Kyungchan, 'Kankoku no shōka: kindai ongaku no keisei katei ni okeru juyō to teikō no rekishi' [Korean school songs: the history of reception and resistance in the process of the formation of modern music], in Yasuda Hiroshi et al. (eds), *Kindai shōka shūsei* (Tokyo: Victor Entertainment, 2000), a volume of essays accompanying a set of 30 CDs KCDK 1381–1410, 235–239.

33
Chung, *Piano methods used in Korea*.

34
Lee Jiesun, 'Shokuminchi Chōsen ni okeru Nihonjin ongakuka ni yoru ongakukai: Kankoku seiyō ongaku juyō-shi no ichisokumen toshite' [Music concerts performed by Japanese musicians in colonial Korea: a study on the historical influences on Korean Western music], *Tōkyō Geijutsu Daigaku Ongaku Gakubu Kiyō*, 42 (2017), 27–47.

predominantly Japanese, music teachers in schools were Japanese, and in the early 1940s Japanese musicians dominated both musically and politically. Noteworthy is the role of the music educator and tenor Hirama Bunju (1900–1989), who trained many Korean singers. She acknowledges that it must have been easy for Korean elites and musicians, given their fascination with, and envy of, Western classical music, to identify with Japan and the empire that provided vital infrastructure to support the social fabric vital for nurturing music, and to collaborate with the Japanese policy of forced assimilation called *naisen ittai* (Japan and Korea as one body).[35]

Part of the fabric of Korea's musical world from the 1920s was the formation of musical societies in rapid succession. The era of 'Cultural Rule' implemented in 1920 was a response to the violent upheaval of the March the First Movement in 1919, and led to the establishment of the newspapers *Donga Ilbo* and *Choseon Ilbo*. The Government's Cultural Rule policy included the creation of a society to promote music, the Gakuyū-kai (Kr. Akwuhui; Association of Musical Friends), in 1921. This was Korea's first voluntary association of musicians, the aim of which was to encourage performances by leading artists. Pianist Kim Yeonghwan was a member.[36] Chung mentions another Japanese musical society, Kyeongsong Umak-hui (Keijō Ongaku-kai).[37] Two years later, the formation of yet another musical society by music enthusiasts was reported in the *Keijō Nippō*: the Music Lovers Society (Ongaku Dōkōkai), which aimed to bring in international artists. Stimulated by Fritz Kreisler's recital in 1923, people wanted to continue to bring such artists to Korea.

> Recently Keijō (Seoul) has seen a remarkable increase of interest in music, and the musical culture has been enriched, notably by the unprecedented success of recitals by Kreisler and others. However, although there is a demand for such concerts, there is a lack of expertise in music promotion, so this society is being formed to fill that gap. The prime movers are Mr Tsubouchi Takashi, Principal of the First Girls' High School, and Mr Ōba, music teacher at the same school. Therefore, the new Society plans to build up contacts with the music world in Japan and invite artists visiting Japan to include Korea in their itineraries so that the best musicians will be introduced here. We will put on concerts to extend the opportunities already available. Already the Society has organised the visit of star Russian violinist Jascha Heifetz to Korea next month, and his recital will take place at the City Hall. (28-10-1923) (p. 4)

The Women's Page of the paper duly reported on the successful launch of the Society on 4-11-1923 (p. 4). A commentary on the event stressed that it was admirable to have the ideal of making Keijō a place where good music could be enjoyed more cheaply than in Tokyo. However, it was not good enough just to invite international

35
Lee Kyungboon, 'Ilbon sikminji sigi seoyang eumak wi suyong gwa gu jeongchijeok wimi' [The reception of Western music and its political meaning in colonial Korea], *Eumakhak*, 18/1 (2010), 155–185; Lee Kyungboon, 'Ilje sigi seoyang eumak munhwa ui Ilbonin wi yeonghyang' [Musical culture in colonial Korea and the influences of Japan], *Eumak Nondan*, 25 (2011), 159–186.

36
Ko, 'Yanagi Kaneko'.

37
Chung, *Piano methods used in Korea*, 42.

stars; local talent should also be promoted and fostered, and the general populace should be educated about music.

Visiting musicians

The musical culture of East Asia was fed by a steady stream of visiting musicians from Europe and America who toured and performed in a circuit of East Asian cities. This occurred thanks to the networks of entrepreneurs Awsay Strok in Shanghai and Hara Zen'ichiro in Tokyo. Korea did not benefit to the same extent as China and Japan from the tours of international musicians to the Far East. However, being on the route of sea and rail connections between Japan and Russia and between China and Europe on the Siberian Railway led to recitals by violinists such as Kreisler in 1923, the pianist Henri Gil-Marchex in 1925 and 1931, and many others.

Indeed, Japan's colonies, including Taiwan and Korea, provided many opportunities for Japanese artists. Performers were invited primarily to bring culture specifically to the ruling Japanese colonising community. Already in December 1916, Ogura Sueko (1891–1944) made a tour to Seoul, when her performances included a Chopin ballade, the Fantasy-Impromptu, the Etude in A flat major, Op. 25 No. 1, and the Berceuse.[38]

In 1922 Yanagi Kaneko and her husband Sōetsu's pro-Korean stance was extensively reported in both the Japanese- and Korean-language press, whereas celebrity pianist Kuno Hisa's recital was not reported in the Korean-language press. In 1923 Kuno Hisa (1886–1925) performed in Seoul on her way to study in Germany (via the Siberian Railway), and included Chopin's Fantasy-Impromptu.[39] Her performances attracted voluminous coverage in *Keijō Nippō* but were not mentioned in *Maeil Shinbo* and other Korean-language papers.

Not until 1925 did a truly international pianist arrive. The visit of Henri Gil-Marchex in December 1925, curiously enough, was not mentioned in the Korean-language press, whereas his next visit in April 1931 received a lot of attention. According to Ahn, he played Beethoven's 'Moonlight' Sonata, various pieces by Chopin (a nocturne, a scherzo, the Berceuse, a waltz, a polonaise, etc.), Liszt's *Légende de Saint-François*, two of Debussy's Préludes, Ravel's *Pavane pour une infante défunte* and Saint-Saens's *Etude en forme de Valse*.[40] His 1931 recital featured Schumann, Debussy and Chopin's Prelude, Op. 28 No. 15, according to a review in *Choseon Ilbo* on 2 May 1931.

It should be added that from the 1930s onwards several exiled pianists who were resident in Japan visited Korea (as well as China, Manchuria and other territories under Japanese influence). They included Leonid Kochansky (1930), Leo Sirota (1937) and Leonid Kreutzer (1934 and 1937).

In Korea, Chopin was mediated in large part by these visiting artists. He was evidently a staple of the repertoire of Japanese

38
Tsugami Motomi, 'Tabi suru josei pianisuto: Ogura Suye no Chōsen ensō ryokō' [A female pianist on tour: Ogura Suyeko on her concert trip to Keijo (Seoul), Korea in 1916], *Joseigaku hyōron*, 23 (2009), 67–91. Ogura gave an all-Chopin recital in Tokyo in 1919, and subsequently others. See Junichi Tada's essay in this issue.

39
Kuno was especially celebrated for her performance of Beethoven. Kanetsune Kiyosuke, author of a lengthy study of Chopin, wrote that Chopin did not suit her.

40
Ahn, *The Story of Western Music in Korea*, 61.

pianists at the time, though Japan's early Chopin specialist, Sawada Ryūkichi (1886–1936), apparently did not perform in Korea.[41]

A local Korean piano culture

When we look at Korean-language newspapers, we find an equally vibrant musical scene that remained largely independent of the Japanese community. There are many reports of community concerts held in churches, the YMCA Hall, schools and hotels with local Korean performers, though these are not covered in Japanese-language newspapers, which focus on Japanese and international musicians.

In the modern period, the piano emerged as a symbol of Korean modern music, and piano music took root as a new culture signifying civilised and progressive values. The piano appeared in modern schools around 1910. Early pianists included Kim Young-hwan, Pak Kyeong-ho, Jeong Aesik, Kim Mary, Kim Weonbok, Lee Aenae and Kim Yeongui. They received preliminary and further training in music through churches and modern schools built by missionaries, and after that, for fully-fledged piano training, they studied abroad in Japan, the United States and even Germany. The Korean piano solo repertoire is mainly limited to the Classical and Romantic periods, dominated by the compositions of Mozart, Beethoven, Mendelssohn, Schumann, Chopin and Brahms.[42] It has to be said, however, that the piano was not as prominent as the voice or violin, and that composition was often combined with studying an instrument. Kim Mihyun stresses that the piano was more of an accompaniment instrument than a solo one. At first, there were only what Ahn calls 'foreigners' concerts', though Koreans were sometimes invited to appear in them. These were 'omnibus concerts' that included a variety of genres and performers of varying standard. The first solo piano recitals were by Pak Kyeongho in 1933 and Kim Yeonghui in 1935.[43]

The typical discourse on Korean music in music criticism of the time in both the general and the musical press gives special attention to musicians returning from study abroad. They are treated like the heroes, or saviours, of 'our music world'. For example, an article by Hyun Jaemyong in *Choseon Ilbo* (2-1-1933), with the title 'New Year Music Stage Stars', discusses recent recitals by the soprano Jeong Hunmo, recently returned from study at Tokyo Imperial Music College (Teitoku Ongaku Gakuin), and by the pianist Pak Kyeongho. According to Hyun, they represent a 'new departure for our music world'. 'Since Pak returned to Korea last autumn from studying at Cincinnati, he has been appointed to teach at Ewha Girls School. The Chopin nocturne he played at his debut recital on 1 December lingers in one's heart'.[44] And this brings us naturally to the topic of Korean pianists.

41
He taught for one year in Taiwan, and made a number of trips to America as a musician on board ocean liners (personal communication from Junichi Tada; see his essay in this issue).

42
Kim Mihyun, 'The piano and modernity', 154.

43
The earliest concert venues were churches and school halls. The YMCA Hall was a major venue from 1908, but when the 600-seat capacity City Hall (Kōkaidō) was built in 1922, it was possible to have concerts by major international artists. First to visit was the violinist Fritz Kreisler (1875–1962), in 1923, after his tour of Japan, followed by the violinist Jascha Heifetz (1901–1987), in November 1923. Large hotels such as the Chōsen Hotel were also used as concert venues. In 1922 a modern state-of-the-art theatre, the Chōsen Gekijō, was constructed (*Keijō Nippō*, 8-11-1922, p. 5). This was a four-storey Western-style theatre building, equipped with a lift and modern stage lighting. The creation of such facilities ushered in an era of visiting international musicians. In 1935 a further facility was built, the Buminkwan, a multi-purpose space that was the venue for concerts, film screenings and other events. Its main hall had a capacity of 2000.

44
See Lee Yunhee, 'Hanguk wi piano yeonju bipyeong e gwanhan yeongu: 1906nyeon-2008nyeon wi jeoneol pyeongmun eul jungsimeuro' [Piano criticism in Korean journals, 1906 to 2008], PhD thesis, Dongduk Women's University, 2011.

Korean pianists

Although few were on the level of post-war pianists, a significant number of professional Korean performers emerged before 1945, and for some of them Chopin was central to the repertoire.

Kim Yongwhan (1893–1979) was the first Korean pianist with a formal conservatory training. He first learnt the organ from a Mrs Blair at Sungshil in Pyongyang, his father having bought him a reed organ from a Japanese resident in Keijō. He then learned to play piano from a missionary in Pyongyang, while a student at Sungshil Middle School. He went on to study piano in Japan, first at the preparatory school for Tokyo Music School, and then at Tokyo Music School itself. He returned to Korea in 1918, and was appointed to teach music at Yonhee Men's College. Dismayed that there was only a single reed organ at the college, he purchased a Steinway grand piano and donated it to the college.

His debut recital was held at the YMCA on 13 October 1919,[45] and it is often heralded as the first formal concert to be given with exclusively Korean performers. He was active as a pianist and a composer, but in 1925 he returned to Japan for a further four years' training at Tokyo Higher College of Music (Kunitachi). As a graduate of the prestigious Tokyo Music School, and thus a member of the Music Lovers Society, he was in a position to bridge Japanese and Korean music circles. His contribution to the musical life of Korea was incalculable, including involvement in the organising of concerts by visiting musicians. He served as an advisor to the *Keijō Nippō* newspaper, where his name frequently appears, and he also taught many of the next generation of pianists. Strangely, his name does not appear in the compendium of pro-Japanese collaborators (see n. 29).

Women pianists were all educated at mission schools, mostly Ewha, including Yun Song-deok (sister of the notorious soprano Yun Simdeok, 1898–1926, who trained at Tokyo Music School), Kim Hapra, Han Kiju (also a Tokyo Music School graduate) and Choi Hwak-ran. Kim Ae-shik (Alice Kim, Mrs Alice Chung; 1896–1950), after graduating from Ewha in 1914, studied music at Kwassui Methodist Girls' College in Nagasaki, then at the Ellison White Music School in Portland, Oregon. She was appointed to the Ewha Music Department in 1923, the first Korean music teacher there.[46]

At this point, I will introduce some pianists noted for their Chopin performances. All had a Christian family upbringing, all studied initially in mission schools, and all studied abroad: Kim Weonbok in Japan, Pak Kyeongho first in Nanjing and then in America, and Lee Aenae first in Japan and then in Berlin.

45
Ahn, *The Story of Western Music in Korea*, 43.

46
Ibidem, 46, 121–122.

Kim Weonbok (1908–2002)[47]

Commonly dubbed a Schumann specialist (acclaimed as the first Korean to perform Schumann's Piano Concerto in A minor), she often also played Chopin.[48] According to Jeon, she was one of Korea's best Chopin performers. Table 1 shows her public performances of Chopin.[49] Representative of the emerging second generation of musicians, she was noted more as an accompanist than a solo performer, but after the formation of Korean symphony orchestras after 1945, she was a prominent concerto soloist.

Table 1. **Performances of Chopin by Kim Weonbok**

Year	Work	Venue
1931	Acc. Unspecified Chopin violin arrangement	
1931	Unspecified waltz	City Hall
1933	'Brilliant' variations (possibly the *Variations brillantes*, Op. 12), and an unspecified nocturne	City Hall

Born in Sincheong (now North Korea, just south of Pyeongyang) to a Christian family, she moved with her family to Seoul when she was four. Through the church, she was exposed at an early age to Western music. Her father was a singer who led the church choir, and taught at a girls' school. He wrote the lyrics of the famous song 'Garden Balsam' by Hong Nanpa. He taught his daughter to read music and to play the organ from the age of five. On her sixteenth birthday (in 1924), she was presented with a piano, a mark of her privileged status, as it was rare at that time for a family to own a piano. After graduating from primary school, she studied piano with Kim Yeonghwan and Mary E. Young.[50] In 1923, she entered Ewha Senior School, from which time she performed regularly in school and church concerts. Notably, she performed Beethoven's 'Moonlight' and 'Pathétique' sonatas.

In 1926 she went to Japan to study at Tokyo Higher College of Music (Kunitachi) for four years, and was taught by the German pianist Paul Scholz (1899–1944). Other Koreans with mission school backgrounds currently studying there were the cellist, and later composer and conductor, Ahn Ik-tae, together with her future husband, the violinist and composer Hong Seong-yu (nephew of Hong Nanpa). On graduating, she received a prize for technical excellence. On their return to Korea in 1930, she and Hong married. They gave a joint recital at the Seoul YMCA Hall, which attracted a lot of attention as a 'husband and wife' duo. Unfortunately, Hong died in 1936, leaving her to support their two sons as a professional musician. She taught at the Central Early Learning School from 1935, and joined the music faculty of Ewha in 1938. She was active especially as the accompanist for the prominent local musicians Hong Nanpa, Lee Inweon and Kye Jeongsik.

47
This section relies heavily on Jeon, 'Pioneers of the Korean Piano World', 116–123.

48
Ahn, *The Story of Western Music in Korea*, 126–128 and 140; Chung, *Piano methods used in Korea*, 69.

49
Tables 1 to 4 give Chopin repertoire as gleaned from the *Donga Ilbo* and *Choseon Ilbo* newspapers.

50
See note 20.

Towards the end of the colonial period, Kim Weonbok participated in a regional tour to support the war. This was an activity of the Choseon Welfare Chamber Orchestra, a group centred on Hyun Jemyeong. Due to this and related activities, she was listed in the compendium of pro-Japanese collaborators (see n. 29).

After the Liberation in 1945, she became chief pianist of the newly formed Korea Symphony Orchestra. She also performed with the KBS Symphony Orchestra, and, as noted earlier, gave the Korean premiere of Schumann's Piano Concerto under the baton of Im Weonsik. In 1946 she was appointed to Seoul Music School, headed by Hyeon Jemyeong. Later this was incorporated into Seoul National University. Up until her retirement in 1973 she trained many prominent pianists, and was reportedly devoted to her students.

Her major contribution to the nation's musical development was to train many fine pianists. As a professor of music at Seoul University, she was an authoritative and sought-after teacher, especially by female piano students. She once remarked that she taught more than 150 students during her career. With so many of her pupils among the nation's pianists, Kim Weonbok reigned as the 'grande dame' of the piano in her later years.[51]

Pak Kyeongho (1896–1970)[52]

Known as a Chopin specialist (see Table 2), Pak Kyeongho initially trained at the Sungshil mission school in Pyeongyang. After studying at Cincinnati Conservatory, he occupied a prominent place in colonial Korean music as a pianist, conductor and critic.

Table 2. **Pak Kyeongho's Chopin repertoire.**

Year	Work	Venue
1932	Nocturne in F major, Op. 15/1 Polonaise in G sharp minor, Op. posth. Polonaise in A major, Op. 40/1	
1933	Polonaise in A major, Op. 40/1 Waltz Op. 34/1 (or /2?) Polonaise in G sharp minor, Op. posth. Nocturne in F sharp major, Op. 15/2	City Hall
1933	Polonaise in G sharp minor, Op. posth.	Baejae College Concert Hall

51
Ahn, *The Story of Western Music in Korea*, 128.

52
This section has relied heavily on the entry for Pak Kyeongho in the online directory of the Academy of Korean Studies, 한국역대인물 종합정보 시스템 - 한국학중앙연구원 (aks.ac.kr), JS Hong's summary of Na Unyong's data card for Pak Kyeongho 나운영음악자료6 (donga.ac.kr) and Ahn, *The Story of Western Music in Korea*.

Born in Pyeongyang to a 'reformist' Protestant family, Pak was exposed to Western music at an early stage. He was a member of the first Korean choir, formed in 1913 at the Jang Dae-hyeon Church in Pyongyang. Together with fellow chorister Han Yeong-gil, he wrote a music theory book for the education of choir members.[53] After graduating from Sungshil in 1923, he studied at Jingling College in Nanjing (a forerunner of Nanjing University, founded by missionaries in 1888).[54] He then studied piano at the Cincinnati Conservatory, Ohio, under an unnamed Chopin expert. He received a bachelor degree in 1932.

On his return from Cincinnati in 1933, he was recruited by Mary Young for the music faculty at Ewha Girls School, where he taught from 1935 to 1939; he also directed music at Yeonhee, which had no specialist music department. A considerable number of his compositions appear on concert programmes from this time. Significantly, the First All-Korea Creative Composition Presentation Grand Music Festival was held on 9–10 June 1939, sponsored by the *Donga Ilbo* newspaper. Korean musicians performed new compositions by Korean composers in various genres from solo songs and instrumental pieces to works for full orchestra. Two solo piano pieces by Pak Kyeongho were performed.[55] Pak was a devout Christian, and composed a number of hymns in the 1930s that are still sung today and included in hymnbooks.[56]

In the 1930s, Pak was active as a pianist and conductor. However, after injuring his arm in a motor accident, he was unable to continue as a performer and turned his attention to music journalism, writing under the pen name of Misang.[57] He became one of the most influential music critics in Korea, alongside Kye Kyeongsik.

His collaboration with the Japanese authorities started in the late 1930s and increased markedly in the 1940s. He helped the Korea Government-General establish the Korean Literary Society in 1937, along with prominent literary figures and musicians, including Hyeon Jemyeong and Hong Nanpa. Its stated purpose was to edify the populace and wean them off decadent popular entertainment such as records, movies, theatre and radio, implementing the policy of the colonial government. The first project of the Korean Literary Society was the Song Purification Movement, with a 'National Song Contest to Celebrate the Fall of Baoding' held in September 1937. A song to a poem by Kim Eok, composed by Lee Yi Sang, and 'The Watchman of the Great Wall', composed by Choi Nam-seon and Hyeon Je-myeong, were conducted with orchestral accompaniment.

In May 1941, Pak composed and conducted a dance poem that celebrated the old capital of Paekche as the site of an ancient exchange between Japan and Korea. For his work he received an honour from the Governor. In June 1941, the Korean Music Association set up a Music Patriotism Week, at which Pak's piano compositions were performed. In January 1942, he acted as judge in the composition section for national songs.

53
J. S. Hong's summary.

54
Korean Wikipedia.

55
Kim Mihyun, 'The piano and modernity', 172–173.

56
See 552장/ 아침 해가 돋을 때 (daum.net)

57
Lee, 'Piano criticism'.

In December 1942, Pak Kyeongho published strongly pro-Japanese essays entitled 'A Year of the Cultural Exhibition: The Path of the Band' in three instalments in *Maeil Shinbo*, urging musicians to work for victory in the Great East Asia War.[58] Pak published a song in *Maeil Shinbo* dedicated to Hirama Bunju, director of the Korea Music Association, when he returned to Japan in 1943, praising him for his great work in achieving unity between Korea and Japan.

Kim Mihyun slates the work of Pak and others who advocated the edification of musical culture and the purification of entertainment for losing their moral legitimacy by colluding with the colonial power. She includes in her condemnation most of the prominent musicians of the time, including Kim Yeonghwan, Pak Kyeongho, Kim Weonbok and Lee Aenae.[59]

After Liberation, Pak worked for the Seoul Broadcasting Company, and in 1949 he took a position with Voice of America and moved to the United States, where he spent the rest of his life. He was thus lost to post-war Korean music. In 2008 he was listed in the compendium of pro-Japanese collaborators (see n. 29).

Lee Aenae (1908–1996)[60]

Lee Aenae was the first Korean woman to study piano in Germany; after her graduation in 1939 she returned to Korea with a Steinway grand.[61] Of about ten Korean musicians who studied in Germany during the colonial period, all but two studied in Berlin.[62] She had acquired Chopin repertoire before studying in Germany (Table 3).

Table 3. **Lee Aenae's Chopin repertoire.**

Year	Work	Venue
1933	Chopin, Berceuse, Op. 57 Etude, Op. 10 No.1 Liszt, Hungarian Rhapsody	Radio broadcast, with Lee's spoken commentary
1934	Chopin, Berceuse, Op. 57 Scherzo in B flat minor, Op. 31 Liszt, Hungarian Rhapsody, Op. 12	Farewell concert, City Hall
1934	Chopin, Nocturne in F sharp major, Op. 15 No. 2 Scherzo in B flat minor, Op. 31	Radio broadcast
1939	Etude, Op. 10 No. 12 ('Revolutionary')	Solo recital, Buminkwan

58
Kim Mihyun, 'The piano and modernity', 179; J. S. Hong's summary.

59
Ibid., 178 n.87.

60
This section is heavily indebted to Lee Kyung-boon, 'Korean Music Students in Berlin'.

61
Chung, *Piano methods used in Korea*, 64 and 69.

Lee Aenae was born in Hawaii, the daughter of a Protestant pastor. She grew up in Seoul, learned piano from Kim Young-hwan, and attended Sukmyeong Girls High School (established in 1906 by Empress Sunhyeon in the imperial palace; not a mission school).[63] Like most students who studied in Germany and elsewhere, Lee Aenae also studied initially in Japan.

After graduating from Sookmyung Girls' High School, Lee Aenae studied at Kobe Girls School (Kobe Jogakuin) in Japan for two years, then at graduate school for another four years, before taking private lessons for one more year with a Russian teacher from Moscow.[64] She gave a graduation recital in Kobe in March 1930.[65]

Before leaving for Berlin State University (Hochschule für Musik) in 1934, a farewell concert was held in the City Hall on 10 April for Lee Ae-nae, Ahn Byeongso (who would also study at the Hochschule für Musik) and the tenor Lee Inseon (whose destination was Italy). Lee performed Chopin's Berceuse and a Liszt Hungarian Rhapsody. In his review of the farewell concert, Pak Kyeongho, a fellow pianist turned critic using the pen-name Misang, wrote gushingly that Lee Aenae's performance was so perfect and outstanding that the audience received it very positively and greatly admired it.[66]

She left Seoul for Germany on 16 April, arrived in Berlin in early May, and returned to Seoul on 23 September 1938. She had exceptional success as a student in Berlin, despite her gender disadvantage and her colonial disadvantage (vis-à-vis Japanese women). She passed the entrance exam first time and duly graduated after nine semesters of study with Curt Boerner. She sang with the school's choir at the opening ceremony of the Berlin Olympics in 1936.

Only a handful of Korean musicians studied in Germany during the colonial period. Despite her importance, there is little research on Lee Aenae apart from Lee Kyungboon's article. She was the first Korean woman to study in Germany, and was the only pianist – indeed the only Korean musician – actually to graduate from the Berlin Hochschule. It was amazing that an unmarried woman of 26 could study in Germany for more than four years, something that proved difficult even for men.

Of course, there were several conditions that favoured Lee Aenae's study in Germany, which was the envy of others, for most could study only in Japan or America. (Lee noted that American students also wanted to study in Germany.) They included her Christian background and her early exposure to Western music. Her extended period of study in Japan was another springboard for further study. Kobe Girls School was a mission school and had already produced several famous musicians, such as the pianist Ogura Sueko, who studied in Berlin from 1912 to 1914. But one factor unique to Aenae was sponsorship by a Japanese philanthropist (see below).

Her homecoming recital in December 1939 is said to have been the first recital in Korea 'with a modern concept'. She was a professor

62
Lee Kyungboon, 'Korean Music Students in Berlin', 43.

63
Ibid., 56.

64
Kim Mihyun, 'The piano and modernity', 167–168.

65
Osaka Mainichi Shinbun, Kobe-ban, 7 March, 1930. Quoted in Hugh de Ferranti, 'Music-making among Koreans in colonial-era Osaka', in A. Tokita and H. de Ferranti (eds). *Music, Modernity and Locality in Prewar Japan: Osaka and Beyond* (Basingstoke: Ashgate. 2013), 243.

66
Lee Yunhee, 'Piano criticism in Korean journals', 114.

at Ewha Womans University for five years. In 1941, together with her husband, the violinist Ahn Byungso, she established a private music academy, the Yeonakwon (Music Research Institute), which produced many pianists. She trained more than 250 students, including Jeong Jin-woo, Shin Su-jeong, Jang Hye-won, Kang Un-kyung and Kwon Ki-taek. She founded the College of Music of Sukmyeong Women's College and served as Sukmyeong's first dean after the college gained university status.[67]

However, as a performer she had a low profile, and failed to shine in the way one might have expected. Poor health in the form of rickets, a bent back and severe rheumatism from around 1949 inhibited her activity, and her broken marriage may have been an additional disincentive. She and Ahn had married possibly while still students in Germany, and they separated and divorced during the Korean War. Other possible reasons for Lee Aenae's low-key musical activities after returning to Korea are offered by Lee Kyungboon. Korea's under-developed musical environment (compared with Japan's) offered few opportunities such as performing with orchestras. Moreover, her personality was reserved, and anything but pushy. Unlike Ahn, she did not boast about her achievements.

In particular, she may have felt some discomfort over the sponsorship she had received from the entrepreneur and philanthropist Yanagihara Kichibei (1858–1945), a Christian textile mill owner in Osaka and member of parliament. From the 1920s to the 1940s, Yanagihara supported Korean female students, providing opportunities for vocational training in Japan with the goal of achieving harmony between Korea and Japan. He took upon himself the 'role of a colonial missionary' to convey the culture and values of the Japanese Empire to colonial Koreans.

Letters written to Yanagihara by Lee Aenae, held in the archives of St Andrews University, Osaka, reveal that when she met Yanagihara in 1924 she realised he could help her fulfil her dream of studying in Germany. Some of the letters dating from 1931 reveal how heavily she was relying on him for financial and other support, including obtaining the necessary passport. However, all she wrote to him from Berlin was a postcard soon after her arrival, and one letter dated 2 April 1936. Strangely, there is not a single letter to him after returning.

With such support, she could have expected to become a famous musician in Korea, but that would have fulfilled Yanagihara's strategy of internal harmony between Korea and Japan, and as a result would have been in tune with Japanese imperial policy. She seems to have been wary in this regard. In an interview published in *Donga Ilbo* on 23 November 1938, she expressed scepticism about mimicking Western values and praxes, a position that she would almost certainly not have held prior to studying abroad. 'Asians will never play the piano as well as Westerners [...]. We should harmonise

67
Academy of Korean Studies. Lee Ae-nae (李愛內) - Encyclopedia of Korean National Culture (aks.ac.kr)

our own melodies. This applies to all areas, not just music'. Perhaps she felt guilty for having received Yanagihara's support.

It is not known to what degree both Lee and Ahn were critical of the Nazi regime. However, neither of them actively engaged in public musical activity under Japanese rule after returning to Korea in 1938, possibly due to their experiences in the Third Reich. Ahn was more active as a conductor, and Lee as a teacher. In 1941 they jointly established a private music school, the Yeonakwon, and the first public student concerts were held in January 1947. Although they both were involved to a degree in the formal associations of colonial society (Lee was listed as board member of the Colonial Korean Musicians Association), and Ahn performed with the Hsinking Orchestra in the Japanese puppet state of Manchuria in the early 1940s, neither Lee nor Ahn was listed in the compendium of pro-Japanese collaborators (see n. 29).

Jeon writes that Lee Aenae was a pianist who emphasised traditional German techniques, like combining the weight of your arms and hands instead of just playing with your hands. Lee Kyungboon suggests another factor regarding Aenae's low profile, namely that Koreans were attuned to a Japanised Western music filtered through Japan rather more than to the 'genuine' piano culture that Lee Aenae had brought back.

Lee Aenae's legacy was above all in her teaching. In particular, during the Korean War, students went to learn from her in Busan, staying at her home. One of these students was Shin Sujeong, the teacher of Cho Seongjin, who won the Chopin Competition in 2015. This reveals a direct lineage in the history of Korean piano music from Lee Aenae through Shin Sujeong to Cho Seongjin.

Lee moved to the United States around 1970 and ran a music school in Chicago, where she passed away in 1996.

Other traces of Chopin: Radio broadcasts[68]

As the piano was more an accompanying than a solo instrument, pianists had limited opportunities for radio broadcasting, unlike violinists and vocalists. Audiences, it was clear, had more interest in singing and violin. Korean piano repertoire was limited to Mozart, Beethoven, Mendelssohn, Schuman, Brahms and Chopin, and their works became the set pieces for competitions, thus further standardising the repertoire.[69] References to Chopin performances on the radio increased during the late 1930s, mostly given by pianists who were resident in Japan, and broadcast from Tokyo, but some were by local performers (see Table 4).

68
On Korean radio in the 1930s, see Michael Robinson, 'Broadcasting, cultural hegemony, and colonial modernity in Korea, 1924–1945', in Gi-Wook Shin and Michael E. Robinson (eds), *Colonial Modernity in Korea* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 1999), 52–69.

69
Kim Mihyun, 'The piano and modernity', 181. A major competition held in 1935 designated the Mazurka in B flat Op. 7 No. 1 as the set piece in the piano division. And in 1937 a Yonhee student competition featured Chopin's Waltz, Op. 65 (*sic*) as a set piano piece.

Table 4. **Selection of broadcasts of Chopin repertoire in the 1930s.**

Year	Work	Performer
1933	Fantasy (presumably Op. 49) Scherzo in B flat minor, Op. 31	Hara Chieko
1934	Nocturne in F sharp major, Op. 15/2 Scherzo in B flat minor, Op. 31	Lee Aenae. All-Chopin programme.
1938	6 unspecified Chopin pieces	Leonid Kreutzer
1938	12 etudes	Maxim Shapiro
1938	Etude in A flat major, Op. 25/1 Etude in F major, Op. 25/3 Mazurka in F minor, Op. 63/2 Mazurka in D major, Op. 33/2 Nocturne in F sharp major, Op. 15/2 Ballade in A flat major, Op. 47	Hara Chieko
1938	Nocturne, Op. 15/ 2 Etude in F minor, Op. 25/2 Etude in C minor, Op. 10/12	Kim Shindeok
1938	Ballade (unspecified) Nocturne (unspecified) Waltz (unspecified)	Leo Sirota
1939	4 unspecified Chopin etudes, Op. 25 Liszt, Hungarian rhapsody	Leonid Kreutzer

Musical contact zones: links between China, Japan and Korea[70]

Western musical culture was transplanted to Korea by missionaries, military bands and school songs, taking a very similar trajectory to that in China, Taiwan and Japan. The whole region was modernised and westernised in response to Western colonial encroachment, and subsequently Japanese imperialist expansion. The above examples support the claim that each country did not receive and foster this Western musical culture in isolation, but that it was fed by the cross-regional interactions between particularly active zones of contact: between the foreign musicians and locals, between

70
The concept of musical contact zones is based on Thornber's model for literary exchanges in pre-1945 East Asia: Karen L. Thornber, 'Early Twentieth-Century Intra-East Asian Literary Contact Nebulae: Censored Japanese Literature in Chinese and Korean', *The Journal of Asian Studies*, 68/3 (2009), 749–775. In cosmopolitan centres in East Asia such as Osaka, Kobe and Shanghai, the piano formed a significant part of a vibrant urban culture between the 1920s and 1940s.

educators and students, and between colonial administrators and colonised peoples. The rapidly developing transport networks, created for the purpose of transporting materials and goods, carried musicians between these zones, with the result that Western music was heard, taught and studied in and between these centres. Although the post-war situation cut off these communication channels for political reasons, the high status of Western music in all these areas exhibits a common and shared musical modernity, developed in differential time phases, but essentially following the same trajectory. There is virtually no backlash against this hegemonic culture of Western classical music.

East Asia had a common musical modernity in Western classical music, informed by intra-regional flows, which was curiously at odds with the political divisions and conflicts of the time.

ABSTRACT
This research is situated within the framework laid out in *Decentering Musical Modernity* (Janz and Yang eds, 2019). Rather than a passive reception of piano music, I avoid 'triumphalist narratives', where an individual nation is seen to heroically master Western music. Instead, the piano in Korea is seen as part of a transnational history, largely congruent with that of China, Japan and Taiwan.

The global prominence of Korean pianists is obvious from the number of prize-winners in the Chopin Competition. This prominence is an outcome of the active take-up of piano and reed organ from the time of the Korean Empire in the late nineteenth century, associated with missionary activity and the establishment of mission schools. Enthusiasm for the piano and its music continued to grow during the period of Japanese rule (1910–1945), when Japan was also a transmitter of Western music, through its model of school music education, and the advanced musical training provided by Japanese music colleges.

This article sketches the history of the piano in Korea during the colonial period, and explores its significance for those aspiring to a global modernity under the conditions of colonial modernity. Attention is given to the steady stream of visiting musicians from metropolitan Japan and Europe between 1920 and 1940 that fed Korea's piano culture. Also documented are recitals with Chopin repertoire by local pianists who trained in Japan, America and Europe.

I argue that East Asia had a common musical modernity, informed by intra-regional flows, which was curiously at odds with the political divisions and conflicts of the time.

KEYWORDS
cultural modernity, colonial modernity, transnational, missionaries, Japanese colonisation

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