University of Cincinnati

Date: 12/11/2012

I, Yun Jeong Kim, hereby submit this original work as part of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Musical Arts in Violin.

It is entitled:
Isang Yun’s Violin Concerto No.1 (1981): A Fusion of Eastern and Western Styles, and the Influence of Taoism

Student’s name: Yun Jeong Kim

This work and its defense approved by:

Committee chair: Bruce McClung, PhD

Committee member: Kurt Sassmannshaus, MM

Committee member: Won-Bin Yim, DMA
Isang Yun’s Violin Concerto No. 1 (1981): A Fusion of Eastern and Western Styles, and the Influence of Taoism

A document submitted to the

Graduate School
of the University of Cincinnati

in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF MUSICAL ARTS

in the Performance Studies Division
of the College-Conservatory of Music

by

Yun Jeong Kim

BM, Kyung Hee University, 2004
MM, University of Cincinnati, 2006

Committee Chair: Bruce D. McClung, PhD
ABSTRACT

When considering the music of Isang Yun (1917–1995), a well-known Korean-German composer, scholars have explored his music for its fusion of Eastern and Western styles. Yun frequently combined Korean traditional music with Western musical structures in his compositions. In addition, he often commented that his works had been significantly influenced by the Eastern philosophy of Taoism, one of two Chinese philosophies along with Buddhism. In his oeuvre, Yun utilized the central principle of Taoism, especially the opposite characteristics of yin and yang. This document traces the fusion of Eastern and Western styles, the influence of Taoist principles, and the interplay between these two approaches in Isang Yun’s Violin Concerto No. 1 (1981).

Yun drew from a wide range of performance practices and styles from traditional Korean instrumental and vocal genres, including string instruments, wood instruments, and percussion instruments. In the Violin Concerto, Yun utilizes performance practices from the Gayakum, Sijo, and Piri, as well as a very general technique common to much Korean music, which Yun synthesized into what he called his Hauptton technique. For each of these, I describe on how they were developed in traditional Korean music and then demonstrate Yun’s use of them in his Violin Concerto, and the interaction of them with Western techniques, instruments, and formal considerations. These are primarily found in the Violin Concerto’s movements, a fast-slow-fast structure with virtuosic cadenzas in the second and third movements, ABA form in the second movement, and sonata form in the third movement.

For the philosophy of Taoism, I discuss how its yin and yang principles influenced Yun’s musical styles in his Violin Concerto. In a lecture at Tübingen University in 1987, Yun
specified that this piece was a statement of Taoism, but he did not indicate which specific
musical features expressed the philosophy. Instead, he explained that he used the dualism of *yin*
and *yang* with its emphasis on opposite elements that are still part of the same force, as a
practical tool in his compositions. I explore the possible ways that Yun included the *yin* and
*yang* dualism in the Violin Concerto, especially in the interaction between the violinist and the
orchestra, and passages that occur on both a small and large scale. I identify rhythmically and
texturally tense music alternating with passages of relaxation and also the treatment of consonant
and dissonant harmonies. Finally, I trace the relationship between sustained tones and their
subsequent ornamented versions. I then identify how Yun fused Eastern and Western musical
principles with Taoist philosophy in the Violin Concerto.

This document comprises four chapters. In the first chapter, I provide a brief
biographical portrait of Yun emphasizing his style periods. In the second chapter, I trace how Yun
blended various Korean instrumental and vocal performing techniques with Western musical
styles in the Violin Concerto. In the third chapter, I explore Taoist principles, and the *yin* and
*yang* dualism evident in this Concerto with the origin and meaning of the philosophy. In the
fourth chapter, I show how Yun fused Eastern and Western musical styles together in his Violin
Concerto.
COPYRIGHT PERMISSIONS

Konzert für Violine und Orchester Nr. 1 by Isang Yun
© Copyright 1981 by Bote & Bock Musik- und Buhnenverlag GMBH & Co., Berlin
Reprinted by permission.

Sonate Nr. 1 in Einem Satz by Isang Yun
© Copyright 1991 by Bote & Bock Musik- und Buhnenverlag GMBH & Co.
Reprinted by permission.

Gasa by Isang Yun
© Copyright 1963 by Bote & Bock Musik- und Buhnenverlag GMBH & Co.
Reprinted by permission.

Königliches Thema by Isang Yun
© Copyright 1976 by Bote & Bock Musik- und Buhnenverlag GMBH & Co.
Reprinted by permission.

Fluktuationen by Isang Yun
© Copyright 1964 by Bote & Bock
Reprinted by permission.

Shao Yang Yin für Cembalo by Isang Yun
© Copyright 1966 by Bote & Bock
Reprinted by permission.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to gratefully acknowledge the support of my committee members, family, and friends throughout this project. First of all, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my committee chair, Dr. Bruce McClung, for detailed guidance and expert advising. He made suggestions that were central to the whole process, and his insightful comments were essential to my final version. I am very thankful to Prof. Kurt Sassmannshaus who has been there for my entire musical life at CCM, and for numerous hours of violin study and musicianship, and Dr. Wonbin Yim for his support of me. Also, to my colleague Ellis Anderson who helped me revise and edit this document. I especially want to thank my parents, Gibum Kim and Dongsook Lee, who have encouraged, and supported me and my music throughout my entire my life; my deepest thanks must go to my husband, Hyunsu Kim, for his love and patience towards me while I finished my degree; and my lovely daughter, Seiun. I am thankful to my sister, Sujung Kim, who has always shared her musicianship, and I would like to thank my parents-in-law for their love, and the many church friends who have continually prayed for me. Above all, I thank God for everything.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT................................................................................................................ ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.......................................................................................... vi
LIST OF MUSICAL EXAMPLES...............................................................................viii
LIST OF TABLES ....................................................................................................... x
LIST OF FIGURE....................................................................................................... xi

CHAPTERS

INTRODUCTION............................................................................................................. 1

1. Yun’s Periodization............................................................................................... 5
   Korean Period (1917–1955).................................................................................. 6
   First European Period (1956–1971)...................................................................... 7
   Second European Period (1972–1982).................................................................. 10

2. Yun’s Fusion of East and West............................................................................. 15
   Traditional Korean Instrumental Techniques in Yun’s Compositions.................. 16
   Traditional Korean Vocal Techniques in Yun’s Compositions.............................. 18
   Korean Styles in Isang Yun’s Violin Concerto (1981)........................................... 20
      *Hauptton* Technique......................................................................................... 21
      *Nonghyun* Technique...................................................................................... 23
      *Sijo* Singing Style............................................................................................ 25
      *Piri* Sound........................................................................................................ 26
   Western Styles in Yun’s Compositions.................................................................. 28
   Western Styles in Isang Yun’s Violin Concerto (1981)......................................... 30

3. The Influence of Taoism in Yun’s music.............................................................. 46
   Taoism Philosophy: Meaning and Origin.............................................................. 46
   *Yin* and *Yang* Dualism.................................................................................... 47
   Taoism and *Hauptton* Technique....................................................................... 51
   Musical Elements of the *Yin and Yang* in Isang Yun’s Violin Concerto (1981).... 55
      Musical Structure............................................................................................... 55
      Harmony........................................................................................................... 56
      Dynamics.......................................................................................................... 57
      Rhythm.............................................................................................................. 58
      Melody.............................................................................................................. 60

4. CONCLUSION........................................................................................................ 62

BIBLIOGRAPHY....................................................................................................... 64
LIST OF MUSICAL EXAMPLES

Ex. 1 Isang Yun, *Königliches Thema* for solo violin (1976), sixth variation, mm. 4–15………19

Ex. 2 Isang Yun, Sonata for violin and piano (1991), mm. 50–51…………………………20

Ex. 3 Isang Yun, Violin Concerto (1981), third movement, mm. 149–52……………………. 23

Ex. 4 Isang Yun, Violin Concerto (1981), third movement, mm. 129–31……………………. 24

Ex. 5 Isang Yun Violin Concerto (1981), second movement, mm. 52–54……………………. 25

Ex. 6 Isang Yun, Violin Concerto (1981), second movement, mm. 9–12……………………. 25

Ex. 7 Isang Yun, Violin Concerto (1981), first movement, mm. 27–29………………….. 26

Ex. 8 Isang Yun, Violin Concerto (1981), third movement, solo violin cadenza……………. 27

Ex. 9 Isang Yun, Gasa for violin and piano, mm. 1–4……………………………………….. 28

Ex. 10 Isang Yun, Gasa for violin and piano, mm. 11–13……………………………………. 29

Ex. 12 J. S. Bach, *Musical Offering, Ricercare*, mm. 1–9…………………………………. 29

Ex. 13 Isang Yun, *Königliches Thema* for solo violin (1976), mm. 1–10………………….. 29

Ex. 14 Isang Yun, Violin Concerto (1981) first movement, mm. 1–9…………………………. 31

Ex. 15 Isang Yun, Violin Concerto (1981), second movement, mm. 1–12……………………. 34

Ex. 16 Isang Yun, Violin Concerto (1981), second movement, mm. 53–55……………………. 35
LIST OF MUSICAL EXAMPLES (continued)

Ex. 17 Isang Yun, Violin Concerto (1981), second movement, mm. 61–63.................. 36

Ex. 18 Isang Yun, Violin Concerto (1981), second movement, mm. 83–88............... 37

Ex. 19 Isang Yun, Violin Concerto (1981) third movement, mm. 1–4...................... 38

Ex. 20 Isang Yun, Violin Concerto (1981), third movement, mm. 44–49................. 39

Ex. 21 Isang Yun, Violin Concerto (1981), third movement, cadenza ................... 42

Ex. 22 Isang Yun, Violin Concerto (1981), third movement, mm. 149–52.............. 45

Ex. 23 Isang Yun, *Shao Yang Yin für Cembalo* (1966), beginning..................... 50

Ex. 25 Isang Yun, *Fluktuationen (Turnover)* (1964), mm. 1–4.......................... 53

Ex. 26 Isang Yun, *Fluktuationen (Turnover)* (1964), mm. 186–90..................... 54

Ex. 27 Isang Yun, Violin Concerto (1981), first movement, mm. 57–58................ 55

Ex. 28 Isang Yun Violin Concerto (1981), first movement, mm. 135–37............... 56

Ex. 29 Isang Yun, Violin Concerto (1981), second movement, mm. 67–68........... 58

Ex. 31 Isang Yun, Violin Concerto (1981), third movement, mm. 47–49............... 59

Ex. 32 Isang Yun, Violin Concerto (1981), first movement, mm. 10–13................. 60
LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. Isang Yun, Violin Concerto (1981), third movement, tempo changes……………… 41

Table 2. Yun’s musical examples of *yin* and *yang* ................................. 48–49
LIST OF FIGURE

Figure 1. Drawing Image of *Hauptton* by Yun.........................................................22
INTRODUCTION

Isang Yun (1917–1995) composed his *Konzert für Violine und Orchester* in 1981. It is the seventh in a series of concertos that he began in 1972, and in scholarly conceptions of his compositional career, it serves as a conclusion to his second European period.\(^1\) The concerto also exhibits several important facets of Yun’s style that scholars often cite and that he himself discussed on numerous occasions. These facets include Yun’s fusion of Eastern and Western methods, styles, and sonorities; his involvement in political movements, especially in the late part of his career; and his interest in Taoist philosophies and ideas. Yun called attention to principles derived from Taoism and the fusion of East and West in a 1987 lecture:

My violin concerto pursues principles of Taoism principles and is a declaration of Tao. The listener may not be able to hear this at the beginning, but the sound is flowing from the beginning to the end of the concerto. I never forget Taoist philosophy, but I am getting to these thoughts within Western genres and structures in order to be unify Western and Eastern styles.\(^2\)

While Yun acknowledged the influence of Taoism, he was not specific how it manifested itself in his concerto. The purpose of this document is to investigate the ways in which Yun fuses Eastern and Western styles and incorporates elements of Taoist philosophy in his Violin Concerto No.1 (1981).

Several scholars have dealt with the interaction of Eastern and Western musical styles in Yun’s music. The most comprehensive exploration of this topic is Jeongmee Kim’s dissertation, “The Diasporic Composer: The Fusion of Korean and German Musical Cultures in

---

the Works of Isang Yun.”\(^3\) Kim categorizes Korean traditional techniques such as the *Hauptton*\(^4\) *technik* (main-tone) or *Hauptklang technik* (main-sound or sound complex), \(^5\) and the *Sijo* singing technique (Korean traditional singing), among others, in three pieces spanning more than twenty years: *Gasa* for violin and piano (1963), the opera *Sim Tjong* (1971–1972), and Symphony No. 4 (1986). I draw from her categories and discussions and apply these concepts to the Violin Concerto No. 1 (1981), which Kim did not discuss. In addition to Kim, Dae-sik Hur studied the Eastern and Western styles in Yun’s flute piece *Salomo*, which employs traditional Korean flute techniques.\(^6\) Laura Hauser’s examined Yun’s *Monolog* for Bassoon by studying Korean traditional ornamentation.\(^7\) Ja-Kyung Ko considered Yun’s opera *Die Witwe des Schmetterlings* (*The butterfly widow*) for its use of the *Hauptton* and *Nonghyun* techniques.\(^8\) Seon Hee Jang discussed Yun’s *Etude* for solo flute (1974) by studying the Eastern sound of Korean traditional flute, *Daegum* and *Tunso*.\(^9\) These DMA theses have taken a similar approach and explored this

---

3 Kim, “The Diasporic Composer.”

4 *Hauptton* and *Hauptklang* are also part of standard German theoretical terminology; *Hauptton* is used as tonic; *Hauptklang* is used as tonic chord.

5 The *Hauptton technik* (main-tone technique) or *Hauptklang technik* (main-sound or sound complex technique) was coined by composer (Isang Yun) himself. The basic concept of *Hauptklang* is the same as that of *Hauptton*, in which the main-tone is replaced by the main sound unit. *Hauptton* or *Hauptklang* is a principle tone, which is embellished by surrounding tones or tonal inflections that Yun involved Korean traditional sound, such as a spectrum of glissandos, grace notes, trills, vibratos, and timbre changes for various embellishments of a principle tone.

6 Dae-Sik Hur, “A Combination of Asian Language with Foundations of Western Music: An Analysis of Isang Yun’s *Salomo* for Flute Solo or Alto Flute Solo” (DMA thesis, University of North Texas, 2005).

7 Laura Hauser, “A Performer’s Analysis of Isang Yun’s *Monolog* for Bassoon with an Emphasis on the Role of Traditional Korean Influences” (DMA thesis, Louisiana State University, 2009).


concept in individual pieces, but no one has considered the Violin Concerto (1981) specifically.

There has also been scholarship examining the Taoist philosophy in Yun’s music. An important source for this concept is the collection of essays Der Komponist Isang Yun, edited by Hanns-Werner Heister and Walter-Wofgang Sparrer.\(^\text{10}\) Sparrer is a prominent Yun scholar: he is the former chairman of the International Isang Yun Society in Berlin, a good friend of Yun’s, and the author of an essay about the influence of Taoism in Yun’s music. In his essay, Sparrer emphasizes that the \textit{yin} and \textit{yang} principle can often be seen in Yun’s music, through his practice of combining two intervals: one that is consonant with one that is dissonant.\(^\text{11}\) Another important source for the Taoist influence is Yun’s autobiography, the Der Verwundete Drache (\textit{Wounded dragon}) written in dialogue form with the German novelist Luise Rinser.\(^\text{12}\) Jiyeon Byeon translated this source in her PhD dissertation for English-language readers.\(^\text{13}\) Byeon emphasizes that Yun’s basic concept of \textit{Hauptton}/\textit{Hauptklang} technique is in large part a consequence of the Taoist concept of \textit{yin} and \textit{yang}. The \textit{Hauptton} is ever-present in the long sustained tone as \textit{yang}, yet at the same time the elements of \textit{yang} are surrounded by \textit{yin}, the various embellishments.\(^\text{14}\) Several authors have explored Taoism in specific pieces by Yun. Chul-Hwa Kim’s study of Yun’s Cello Concerto (1975/76) discusses the Taoist principle of \textit{yin} and \textit{yang},\(^\text{15}\) and Sooah Chea’s

\(^{10}\) Hanns-Werner Heister and Walter Wolfgang Sparrer, eds., \textit{Der Komponist Isang Yun} (Munich: Edition Text & Kritik, 1987).

\(^{11}\) Walter Wolfgang Sparrer, “Hauptton-Holon,” in ibid., 83.

\(^{12}\) Luise Rinser and Isang Yun, \textit{Der Verwundete Drache} (Berlin: S. Fischer, 1977).

\(^{13}\) Jiyeon Byeon, “The Wounded Dragon: An Annotated Translation of \textit{Der Verwundete Drache}, the Biography of Composer Isang Yun, by Luise Rinser and Isang Yun” (PhD diss., Kent State University, 2003).

\(^{14}\) Ibid., 11–25.

\(^{15}\) Chul-Hwa Kim, “The Musical Ideology and Style of Isang Yun, as Reflected in his Cello Concerto for Violincello and Orchestra (1975/76)” (DMA thesis, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 1997).
study of *Interludium A* (1982) shows the influence of Taoism on Yun with his *Hauptton* technique. Yulee Choi examined Yun’s Symphony No. 3 (1985) with its manifestation of the *yin* and *yang* elements, and Seong Eun Oh studied Taoist concepts between the two violins parts and as *yin* and *yang* characteristics in Yun’s Sonata for Two Violins (1983).

---


Chapter 1

Yun’s Periodization


While MacCredie’s essay is the most detailed and reflects Yun’s interest in certain genres for short time spans, in the end, all of these periods are relatively similar. Yun’s style changed over time, moving from complicated and abstract serial techniques to a more atonal style (1956–1971), and generally to a somewhat more tonal language in 1970s (1972–1982). In


4 Dae-Sik Hur, “A Combination of Asian Language with Foundations of Western Music: An Analysis of Isang Yun’s Salomo for Flute Solo or Alto Flute Solo” (DMA thesis, University of North Texas, 2005), 7–15.
his late period (1983–1995), he also began writing in more traditional genres, producing five symphonies in the late 1980s, sonatas for various instruments, cantatas and other vocal pieces, and many other pieces. However, the fusion of East and West remained relatively constant. Because I am not specifically considering pieces before 1975 and for simplicity sake, I have adopted Lee’s periodization.

Korean Period (1917–1955)

Isang Yun was born in the small port village Tongyoung, Korea in 1917, as the first son of yanban scholar Kihyon Yun and farmer-class mother Sun-dal Kim. Yun’s education began when he was five years old, at a Chinese-style private school, where among other things, he learned about Chinese literature and history including the basic tenets of Confucianism and Taoism. At the age of eight, his father placed him in a Western-style elementary school where he first heard the sound of the organ and cello. Since Yun’s father was the head of a strict yangban-scholar family, he did not allow his son to learn any musical instruments or to listen to any musical performances of theatrical troupes. Although his father was strict and tried to keep him away from music, especially the one-person operas, Pansori, Yun was exposed in his youth to Korean traditional music and Western instruments, which would have a profound impact on his subsequent musical career.


6 During the Japanese colonial period (1910–1945), Western-style schools taught Japanese culture and language.

7 After 1904, especially with the Japanese annexation in 1910, many Korean court musicians lost their jobs and formed traveling theatrical troupes for their living. Usually they performed Korean traditional songs and dances. For example, the portion of Pansori (one-person operas) and Korean traditional folk song were performed by the troupes. One of the Pansori, Sim Chong, became a subject for Yun’s opera Sim Tjong, composed for the Munich Olympics in 1972.
In 1933 Yun moved to Seoul to study harmony and music theory. In the next six years, he made sojourns to Japan, studying composition, music theory, and cello in Osaka (1935–37) and Tokyo (1939–41). Although he was eager to learn music, he had hard time supporting himself and suffered discrimination by the Japanese. He returned to Korea in 1941 and was active in the resistance movement against the Japanese colonial rule, under which he was imprisoned in 1943. He was imprisoned until the liberation of Korea in 1945. He then taught music in Tongyong, Pusan, and Seoul. In 1955 he received the Seoul Culture Award for his String Quartet No. 1 and Piano Trio, which enabled him to travel to Europe for further study.

First European Period (1956–1971)

Though he wanted to go to Germany, because of a restriction placed on Koreans, Yun went first to Paris in 1956 where he studied with Tony Aubin and Pierre Ravel at the Paris Conservatoire (1956–1957). After a year in Paris, he traveled to Berlin and studied with Boris Blacher (composition), Reinhard Schwarz-Schilling (theory), and Josef Rufer (dodecaphony) at the Berlin Hochschule für Musik (1958–1959). Before returning to Korea, he visited Darmstadt in 1958 and attended the Kurse für Neue Musik, which was the center for modern art music in Europe. In Darmstadt he met many avant-garde composers, such as Pierre Boulez (b.1925), John Cage (1912–1992), Bruno Maderna (1920–1973), Luigi Nono (1924–1990), and Karlheinz Stockhausen (1928–2007), who were experimenting with musical techniques well beyond those

---

8 At that time, Koreans had to have an invitation from a resident of the European country they wanted to visit, and fortunately, Yun had a friend in France.

9 Kurse für Neue Musik in Darmstadt (course for new music in Darmstadt) was initiated in 1946 by Wolfgang Steinecke, who continued to be closed associated with it until his death in 1961. The compositional techniques of the Darmstadt School were widely adopted by other modernist composers. It nurtured the work of the young serialists in the 1950s and 1960s and came to stand as a symbol of modernism.
of the serial or twelve-tone composers. In an interview with Luise Rinser, Yun expressed amazement at their experimental ideas, especially those of John Cage. As a result Yun began to wonder about his own artistic identity and the significance of his own artistic goals. He submitted his *Musik für Sieben Instrumente* (*Music for seven instruments*) at the Darmstadt course in 1959, and it received a very positive reception for the first time. Yun had composed this piece in a strict twelve-tone technique with Eastern elements that recall the meditative sound of Korean court music. At the same time, he also sent *Fünf Stücke für Klavier* (*Five pieces for piano*) to the Gaudeamus Foundation for the Bilthoven Competition, and these pieces were well received in both Darmstadt and the Netherlands. It was at this time that Yun decided to move his wife, Soo-Ja Lee, and two children, Jung Yun and Yoo-Kyung Yun, to Germany and settle in Berlin.

The early 1960s saw a maturity in his musical compositions, with such works as *Loyang* (1962), *Gasa* (1963), and *Garak* (1963) for chamber music; *Bara* (1960), *Symphonic Scene for Large Orchestra* (1960), and *Fluktuation for Orchestra* (1964); and two operas, *The Dream of Liu-Tung* (1965) and *The Butterfly’s Window* (1967–1968). Yun’s distinctive synthesis of East and West is clear in these pieces as he blended serial techniques with elements of Korean traditional music. Even the titles of his works indicate his Asian heritage. His orchestral work *Bara* (1960) evokes the spirit of court and temple ceremonies, as *Bara*, a percussion instrument similar to Western cymbals, is used in Buddhist ceremonial dances. Yun drew his inspiration from Chinese and Korean court music, blending these with the modern Western style he had

---

10 Jiyeon Byeon, “The Wounded Dragon: An Annotated Translation of *Der Verwundete Drache*, the Biography of Composer Isang Yun, by Luise Rinser and Isang Yun” (PhD diss., Kent State University, 2003), 11.
learned in Paris, Berlin, and Darmstadt.\textsuperscript{11} Many scholars, including Andrew McCredie, position Yun at this time as a significant composer of European avant-garde music and an important mediator of Asian and European musical styles.\textsuperscript{12} His international recognition grew significantly, when in in 1966, he traveled to the United States for two months to give performances at the Tanglewood and Aspen music festivals, and lectures in San Francisco, Los Angeles, Chicago, and New York.\textsuperscript{13}

However, the East Berlin Event (1967–1969) would seemingly change Yun’s aesthetic and philosophical viewpoints for the duration of his career. He had long wanted to found a music institute in North Korea to serve a community that had little access to foreign art. With this idea, he and his wife traveled to North Korea in 1963 to visit a long-time friend. This act was in direct violation of the National Security Law that forbade South Korean citizens from entering North Korea or having contact with communist citizens and states. Yun was placed on a list of Koreans living in Western Europe that were in defiance of this law and in 1967, was arrested and returned to South Korea. Yun was held as a spy and sentenced to death. Yun continued to compose in prison and stated on one occasion that despite his physical imprisonment, his musical imagination and ideas were free. It was in prison that he finished his comic opera \textit{Die Witwe des Schmetterlings} (\textit{Butterfly widow}, 1968), which he had started composing in Germany. The opera was completed on February 5, 1968 and premiered on February 23, 1969, while he was still in prison. He also completed two instrumental works, \textit{Riul für Klarinette und Klavier} (1968) and \textit{Images für Flöte, Oboe, Violine und Violincello} (1968). Many famous musicians including

\textsuperscript{12} McCredie, “Isang Yun (1917–1995),” 588.  
\textsuperscript{13} Ibid., 587.
Karajan, Ligeti, Stockhausen, and Stravinsky wrote letters of petition on his behalf. He was finally released to the custody of West Germany in 1969 and prohibited from returning to South Korea.

Second European Period (1972–1982)

Yun’s second European Period can be seen as beginning shortly after his exile from Korea, and as with other composers in the twentieth century, shows a renewed interest in connecting to a larger audience and communicating political ideals. Yun stated that “a composer is not merely an artist, but also a human being in the world….When there is agony and injustice, I want to speak out (participate in it) through my music.” He did not turn away from social problems when composing his music. For example, he addressed his own political imprisonment with his cantata Schwelle (On the threshold, 1975), based on “Moabiter Sonetten,” which Albrecht Haushofer had composed in prison before he was executed by the Nazis in 1944. Coinciding with a motivation to appeal to the conscience of humanity and to address political issues during this time, Yun’s musical style changed as well. He continued to incorporate traditional Korean influences, but in the Western half of his style, he moved towards a more accessible, less abstract, and a somewhat more tonal, melodic, and consonant style than before.

In this second period, Yun also turned to a particular genre, the concerto, and exploited its characteristic dialogue between soloist and instrumental group in the service of his political ideals. He composed seven concertos in a about ten years: the Konzertante Figuren für kleines Orchester (1972), Piece concertante für Kammerensemble order kleines Orchester (1976),

---

Konzert für Violoncello und Orchester (1975/76), Konzert für Flöte und kleines Orchester
(1977), Doppelkonzert für Oboe und Harfe mit kleinem Orchester (1977), Konzert für Klarinette
und Orchester (1981), and Konzert für Violine und Orchester (1981). Reflecting on his use of the
concerto to Rainer Sachtleben and Wolfgang Winkler, Yun stated that it allowed him to express
his personal experiences and political beliefs:

Since the middle of the ’70’s, I have written a whole series of instrumental concertos. I
had determined to put my political experience in my works. For that I needed a musical
language that has humanitarianism. Therefore, I selected story materials, for example, a
nun in the Flute Concerto, who dances in the moonlit night, and also for Double
Concerto, which has the issue of the division of Korea. And my Cello Concerto which
is also the reality during my imprisonment, has to do with life and death.15

The style of the concerto with its orchestra-soloist alternation is an appropriate medium to
express an antagonistic relationship between an individual and his society, such as with Yun’s
personal experience during the East Berlin Event. In Yun’s concertos, usually the solo
instrument represents a person and the orchestra, a circumstance, destiny, or nature.16 In
conversation with German novelist Luise Rinser in his autobiography, the Wounded Dragon,
which is written in dialogue form, Yun explained his musical language in the Cello Concerto as
his desire for freedom:

Rinser: How do you interpret the dream?

Yun: You know my Cello Concerto. Remember the octave leaping toward the end. This
leaping means desire and demand for freedom, purity, and absoluteness. In the
orchestra, the oboe slides from G sharp to the A, and this A is taken over by the
trumpets, which, in this high position, always have for me something divine and
admonishing. There are two trumpets. They play this A alternately. The cello wants to
reach it, but it does not succeed….The endless and inconceivable height, the
absoluteness, the A of the trumpets that remains until the end.17


16 Yonghwan Kim, Isang Yun Study (Seoul: Sigongsa, 2001), 273–78.

The Violin Concerto also exhibits many of the same stylistic characteristics and political allusions as Yun’s other concertos. In addition to concertos, Yun composed various small instrumental works during this period, such as *Etüden für Flöte(n) solo* (1974); *Fragment für Orgel* (1975); *Rondell für Oboe, Klarinette und Fagott* (1975); *Duo für Viola und Klavier* (1976); *Königliches Thema für Violine Solo* (1976); *Salomo für Altflöte order Flöte* (1977/78); *Sonata für Oboe, Harfe und Viola order Violoncello* (1979); *Novellette für Flöte (Altflöte und Harfe* (1980); and *Interludium A für Klavier* (1982).


In the early 1980s, Yun’s compositional output changed once again. He became more interested in large-scale pieces than he had been in the past. Furthermore, his political statements in his pieces became much more potent. From 1983 through 1987, he composed a five-symphony cycle on social issues: *Symphonie Nr. 1 für großes Orchester* (1982/82), a warning against nuclear weapons; *Symphonie Nr. 2 für Orchester* (1984), dedicated to “Ourselves” in the world; *Symphonie Nr. 3 für Orchester* (1985), for nature; *Symphonie Nr. 4, Im Dunkeln singen* (1986), dedicated to women; and *Symphonie Nr. 5 für Orchester und Bariton solo* (1987), for world peace. While these titles express general feelings, the symphonies were also intended for a specific political ends, that of the unification of North and South Korea.

During the 1980s Yun’s activities reflect these desires. In 1987 he suggested and worked at producing a music festival for the unification of South and North Korea. Regarding the festival, he stated:

> South and North Korea have wanted to do something together. Political negotiation will take a long time. Making a breakthrough to solve the complexities of South and North Korea is my purpose of the music festival…. Therefore, music would have the
power to bring about political reconciliation and reunification.\textsuperscript{18}

Although the festival was cancelled in 1987 for political reasons, Yun finally saw his dream realized in 1990 when it was held on 14 October 1990 in North Korea, and again on 9 December 1990 in South Korea. For this festival, he composed an oratorio, \textit{Naui Dang, Naui Minjokiyo (My land my people, 1987)}, for soloists, choir, and orchestra. The oratorio describes the problems of contemporary Korea, and it treats the two Koreas as a single country, using texts written by political prisoners of South Korea. The text addresses South and North Korea as one nation and generally reflects the hope for unification. The music is derived from the rhythm of the text, relying on Korean folk rhythms with declamation of \textit{Pansori} (one-person opera). It was premiered at the music festival at Pyongyang, North Korea in 1990.

In the 1990s, Yun focused on composing works for small ensemble, such as his \textit{Streichquartett V in einem Staz} (1990); \textit{Sonata für Violine und Klavier} (1991); \textit{Quartett für Horn, Trompete, Posaune und Klavier} (1992); \textit{Streichquartett VI in vier Sätzen} (1992); \textit{Trio für Klarinette, Fagott und Horn} (1992); \textit{Espace II für Violoncello, Harfe und Oboe ad lib.} (1993); \textit{Quartett Für Oboe, Violine, Viola und Violoncello} (1994); and \textit{Quintett II für Klarinette und Streichquartett} (1994). McCredie writes that during the 1990s, Yun created a new sound, with “a greater warmth” on account of the concentration of textual and timbre richness in his sixth string quartet and second clarinet quartet.\textsuperscript{19}

Yun had been a professor at Hochschule der Künste Berlin from 1977 to 1987 and was honored several times for his compositions in Germany. He was granted an honorary doctoral

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{19} McCredie, “Isang Yun (1917–1995),” 592.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
degree from Tübingen University in German in 1985, the Federal German Republic’s Distinguished Service Cross of the Order of Merit in 1988, the medal of the Hamburg Academy in 1992, the medal of the Goethe Institute in Munich in 1994, membership of the Hamburg and Berlin Academies of the Arts, and membership of European Academies of the Arts and Sciences in Salzburg. Even though a large number of Isang Yun’s compositions were performed at the Isang Yun Music Festival in 1994 in South Korea, because of some political issues, he could not return to his homeland. He died on 3 November 1995 at the age of seventy-eight in Berlin. After his death, the International Isang Yun Society was established in Berlin in 1996.
Chapter 2

Yun’s Fusion of East and West

Isang Yun was one of the first Asian composers to gain an international recognition alongside Chinese-American composer Chou Wen-Chung (b. 1923) and Japanese composer Toru Takemitsu (1930–1996). Like with Wen-Chung and Takemitsu, critics often discussed the music of Yun as a fusion of Eastern and Western styles and techniques. Of the three composers and in terms of biography, Yun was the most international, having been born and trained in Japanese-occupied Korea, before moving to Europe in the 1950s, where, after spending a few years in France, he then settled in Germany for the duration of his life.

The notion of Yun’s style as a mixture of Eastern and Western techniques can be traced to the early criticism he received at Darmstadt. As the German music critic Wolfgang Steinecke (1910–61) said about his *Music für Sieben Instrumente* (1959):

> This composer [Yun] strove for a combination of Korean court music, at least in its intonation, and the new Western compositional techniques that he had learned from Boris Blacher and Josef Rufer. This work [*Musik für Sieben Instrumente*] is tastefully composed with delicate colors, lucid in its sound and form. A particular decorative effect, produced by swirling wind figures and subtle touches (plucking) in the strings, distinguishes the work. It is an admirable and uncomplicated composition.¹

After early success in Europe, Yun continued to compose and became a renowned modernist composer by utilizing Korean traditional instrumental and vocal techniques within traditional and contemporary Western styles. Another commentator, Harald Kunz, writes the following in his liner notes of Yun’s *Réak* for large orchestra (1966):

> The frequent impression of Yun’s music is created by special performing techniques. In particular the expressive potentials of strings are enlarged in Yun’s scores, and he also handles the wind instruments in an unusual manner, making them approach the sound character and playing techniques of East-Asian instruments. In Isang Yun’s music,

---

¹ Quoted in Luise Rinser and Isang Yun, *Der verwundete Drache* (Frankfurt: S. Fischer, 1977), 72–73. Translation by Jeongmi Kim.

3 Yun withdrew his compositions composed in Korea and Japan before 1956 because he was not satisfied with them.

barely touch the edge of the mouthpiece. Western players call this technique flutter-tonguing and apart from the “breathy” timbre that is created, the other distinction is the many quarter-tones that are heard along with the technique. The Piri, a type of bamboo oboe, also involves varying degrees of lip pressure on the reed as well as air movement and positions of the mouth on the reed. From this performance practice come the many ornamental grace notes, vibratos, glissandos, dynamic changes and rests associated with traditional Korean music. These techniques can be heard in Yun’s pieces for solo oboe and flute, including Piri (1971) for solo oboe, Etüden (1974) for solo flute, and Sori (1988) for solo flute.\(^5\)

In addition to the techniques from the woodwind instruments, Yun used performance techniques derived from Korean stringed instruments, such as the Gayakum,\(^6\) Haegum,\(^7\) Komungo,\(^8\) and Yanggum.\(^9\) There is a large space between the strings and the sounding board of the Gayakum, providing a distinct timbre to the instrument. Players take advantage of the myriad sound effects available by manipulating the strings, pushing down, and plucking. Pushing a string all the way down causes a wide vibrato similar to a Japanese Koto. Yun duplicated this timbre on the modern instrument in his Violin Sonata (1991) by the use of many tremolos,

---


\(^6\) The Kayagum is a traditional Korean zither-like stringed instrument, usually with twelve strings. The strings have recently been expanded to twenty one strings or more. It is the best known traditional Korean musical instrument among the zither family.

\(^7\) The Haegum is a traditional Korean fiddle instrument with two silk strings and is held vertically on the knee of the performer played with a bow.

\(^8\) The Komungo is a traditional Korean plucked instrument with a short bamboo stick called Suldae, which is held between the index and middle fingers of the right hand, while the left hand presses on the strings to produces various pitches and vibratos.

\(^9\) The Yanggum is the Korean version of a dulcimer with metal strings. Although not as common as the Kayagum or Komungo, its timbre creates a mystical effect.
glissandos, and trills. Further, in his piece *Colloïdes Sonores* for string orchestra, Yun used a Korean stringed instrument as a subtitle for each movement: I. *Hogung* (*Haegum*), II. *Gomungo* (*Komungo*), and III. *Yanggum*. Yun tried to reproduce the timbres of these instruments in his *Colloïdes Sonores*. Especially in the second movement, the orchestra imitates the timbre of *Komungo* by the string players who produce *Komungo*-like pizzicato tremolos.

Yun also imitated the techniques of the Korean percussion instrument, the *Changgo*. A large horn drum, the *Changgo* is the most widely used of all Korean instruments, and it provides a rhythmic accompaniment to vocal and instrumental pieces. The left side of *Changgo* is covered in cowhide and produces a low tone, while the right side, covered in horsehide, produces a high tone. It also makes different timbres because the left side is struck with the left palm and the right side is played with a bamboo stick. In the third movement of *Loyang* for chamber orchestra (1962), Yun utilized these different timbres and traditional rhythms of the *Changgo* by contrasting the bass and snare drums in his chamber orchestra: the bass drum imitates the low tone and the snare drum references the fast rolling sound of the high tone of the *Changgo*.¹⁰

**Traditional Korean Vocal Techniques in Yun’s Compositions**

Along with the instrumental techniques, Yun used traditional Korean vocal techniques in his compositions. In general, Korean traditional music derived from the ritual and ceremonial court music from the Chinese Tang dynasty (618–907). In 1116, Korea (at the time Koryo dynasty) received Chinese ritual music, called *Aak* with a set of Chinese instruments. *Aak* included Confucian temple music and shrine music for the royal ancestors. Later the *Aak* was grouped in one of two basic categories of Korean music: *Chongak*, music for high culture, and

---

Minsokak, music for low culture. From this period Chongak contained ritual music, Confucian temple music, and royal shrine music for high cultural music with three different kinds of song forms: Gasa (long narrative song), Kagok (lyric song), and Sijo (short lyric song). Yun utilized these song forms with their titles in his Gasa for violin and piano (1963), and Gagok for guitar, percussion, and voice (1972). Yun also imitated the Sijo in his Königliches Thema for solo violin (1976). The Sijo is characterized by a series of short accented notes, followed by long unaccented notes. An example of this approach can be found in the last variation of his Königliches Thema (see Example 1).

Ex. 1 Isang Yun, Königliches Thema for solo violin (1976), sixth variation, mm 4–15.

The other category, Minsokak for low cultural music, included such genres as Minyo (folk song) and Pansori (one-person opera). These types of music were not for the elites, but rather commoners, and tended to be more passionate and given to free emotional expression. Unlike Chongak (ritual music), the music for the poor was and is a part of their native life and their story. In this type of music, vibratos and glissandos are generally representative of their expression and emotions.\textsuperscript{11} Yun recalled the vibratos and glissandos of the Pansori in his Sonata for Violin and Piano (1991). A Pansori opera features poetry, gestures, and music with

\textsuperscript{11} Ibid., 66–67.
percussion accompaniment, and the singing is characterized with wide vibratos and continuous trills over the drummer’s part. In Yun’s Sonata, the violin resembles the singing style of *Pansori* with continuous trills and glissandos, and the piano supports the violin part in the role of a percussion instrument (see Example 2).

Ex. 2 Isang Yun, Sonata for Violin and Piano (1991), mm. 50–51.

Yun also used a tragic subject of *Pansori, Sim Chong*, for his opera *Sim Tjong*, composed for the Munich Olympics in 1972 and performed to wide acclaim. The *Sim Tjong* is a two-act opera based on a Korean legend in which *Sim Chong* (the main character) sacrificed herself for her blind father because of their poverty.

Korean Styles in Yun’s Violin Concerto (1981)

Yun drew from a wide range of performance practices and styles used in traditional Korean instrumental and vocal works in his Violin Concerto (1981). Akiko Tatsumi premiered this concerto with the Frankfurt Radio Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Zdenek Mácal, on April 29, 1982. Commentators have routinely cited this concerto as typical of Yun’s timbre and

---

12 Ibid., 123.
sound quality in terms of his “East Asian sound” or “Korean Sound.” When the concerto was premiered, most Western audiences could recognize the Korean timbres through the violinist’s large and varied vibratos, glissandos, trills, and quarter tones, all of which lend a mysterious and fantastic sound coupled with the traditional Korean rhythms played by the percussion instruments. This style is often compared to Debussy’s impressionistic pieces. However, because of its Korean timbres and techniques, the premier of the Violin Concerto was both successful and heralded as a new modernist work. The Frankfurter Allgemeine Zietung issued high praise, writing that Yun’s Concerto was a “distinct” work and that it was one of the most important models of European contemporary music. In the Concerto, Yun presented many of Korean traditional techniques and timbres within a Western Violin Concerto’s form and genre. Specifically, he utilized Korean traditional techniques from the Gayakum, Sijo, and Piri, as well as a general technique common to much Korean music that Yun synthesized into an idea he called his Hauptton technique.

Yun’s idea of Hauptton technique can be summarized by his own words from a lecture he gave to the Hochschule für Musik and Mozarteum in Salzburg, May 21, 2003:

The basis of all my composition is “Einzelton” (a single tone). Each tone, involving the power of the chameleon, becomes a foundation along with ornamentations, vibratos, accents, glissandos which envelop the sound unit of a single note. I called this “Hauptton”….

---

13 Yonghwan Kim, Isang Yun Study (Seoul: Sigongsa, 2001), 352–55.

14 Quoted in ibid.

The basic concept of *Hauptton* is that a principle tone is sounded and then embellished by surrounding tones or tonal inflections drawn from traditional Korean music. These embellishments constitute a wide range of glissandos, grace notes, trills, vibratos, microtones, timbres, and dynamic changes, which reinforce the principle tone.\(^\text{16}\) If the tone is the main tone (*Hauptton*), it cannot itself constitute a structural unit. To make the sound a main tone, it needs a preparation and then a settling-down with numerous ornamentations, vibratos, and glissandos, as the following example demonstrates:

![Image of Hauptton by Yun](image)

**Figure 1.** Drawing Image of Hauptton by Yun.\(^\text{17}\)

The central tone of an individual passage based on this technique can and does frequently change throughout a piece. Yun also employs this technique to achieve a kind of pitch centricity common with Western music. For instance, in his Violin Sonata (1991), *Haupttons* of a tri-tone (C-sharp and G) are the central pitches in this piece and serve as important signposts in all the significant moments in the form. In the Violin Concerto (1981), the *Hauptton* is A, and embellishing notes decorate the *Hauptton* at the ending of the third movement (see Example 3;  

---


Hauptton marked with an asterisk).

Ex. 3 Isang Yun, Violin Concerto (1981), third movement, mm. 149–52, solo violin and string parts.

Nonhyun technique

Apart from the Hauptton technique, other Korean influences contribute to the texture and variety of sonorities found in Yun’s works. The Nonhyun technique is derived from Kayagum playing,\(^\text{18}\) which is a traditional Korean stringed instrument. The Kayagum has a significant amount of space between the strings and the soundboard, and the player manipulates the strings by shaking, pushing down, and plucking. When a player pushes a string all the way down, this causes a wide vibrato, similar to the sound of a Japanese Koto. Yun invokes this sound with a modern instrument in his Violin Concerto with the use of many tremolos, glissandos, and trills. In the third movement, for example, Yun uses many tremolos in the woodwinds, and many trills and glissandos in the violin solo and the strings (see Example 4).

\(^{18}\) The Kayagum is a traditional Korean zither-like twelve-string instrument. Recently, the strings have been increased on some zithers to twenty-one, or more. The Kayagum is the best known traditional Korean musical instrument among the zither family.

In the second movement, Yun also used many trills and tremolo in the woodwind parts to imitate the Kayagum (see Example 5).
Yun also conjured up the sound of *Sijo*, a traditional Korean singing style, characterized by a series of short accented notes that are followed by long unaccented notes. This technique is prominent in Yun’s Violin Concerto, an example of which can be found in the solo violin part of the second movement (see Example 6). In the beginning of the second movement after the orchestral introduction, the violin melody starts with an E₄, which is decorated by short accented note in m. 11. This is a typical technique of the Korean *Sijo* singing style.

Ex. 6 Isang Yun, Violin Concerto (1981), second movement, mm. 9–12, solo violin part.
In addition, the sound of the Korean traditional bamboo oboe, *Piri*, is very distinct in the Violin Concerto. As the performance technique of *Piri* is created by a player who can vary the pressure of his lips on the reed, the air pressure, and the position of the reed in his mouth, it creates many ornamental grace notes, vibratos, glissandos, dynamic changes, and rests. Using modern Western instruments, Yun imitated the sound through flutter tonguing.\(^{19}\) In the first movement of Violin Concerto, Yun calls for quarter tones, indicated as “︵” or “︶” on E5 in the oboe part in m. 29 to imitate the *Piri* (see Example 7). In all three movements, Yun frequently used ︵ or ︶ for the flutter-tonguing technique not only in the oboe part, but also in the horn and flute parts to imitate the *Piri*.

Ex. 7 Isang Yun, Violin Concerto (1981), first movement, mm. 27–29, woodwind and percussion parts.

\(^{19}\) Jang, “Interpretation of Extended Techniques in Unaccompanied Flute Works by East-Asian Composers,” 48–54.
Yun indicates ¯ or ḳ for the flutter-tonguing technique in the oboe solo part in m. 29 to make a sound similar to the *Piri*. In addition to the oboe part, he utilized this timbre in the horn part in mm. 80–81 for the flutter-tonguing techniques in the first movement (see Example 8).

Ex. 8 Isang Yun, Violin Concerto (1981), first movement, mm. 78–81, horn and solo violin parts.

Yun also used flutter tonguing in the solo violin part in the cadenza of the last movement. He specifies ¯ or ḳ on the notes E4 and A4 to make a sound similar to the *Piri* (see Example 9).

Ex. 9 Isang Yun, Violin Concerto (1981), third movement, solo violin cadenza.

As a result, Yun utilized the *Piri* sound not only for woodwind instrument in the Western tradition, but also for the horn and the violin.
Western Styles in Yun’s Compositions

Yun began to seriously study Western compositional styles in the 1950s. He went to Paris Conservatoire in 1956 and studied with Tony Aubin (composition) and Pierre Revel (theory). During this time, he became familiar with the works of Beethoven, Wagner, and other canonic Western composers. He then moved to Berlin to study serial music in 1957 with Boris Blacher (composition), Reinhard Schwarz-Schilling (theory), and Josef Rufer (dodecaphony) at (West) Berlin Hochschule für Musik (1958–1959). From these teachers, he learned contemporary Western compositions and styles, such as the twelve-tone technique and serial music, as well as the traditional imitation techniques and formal genres, such as the symphony, string quartet, concerto, and opera. As for his use of twelve-tone technique, we can see a row in the violin part of his Gasa for violin and piano (1963) and modifications of this row in next few measures (see Example 10).

Ex. 10 Isang Yun, Gasa for violin and piano, mm. 1–4.

Yun followed the strict twelve-tone series in the first four measures in the violin melody and modified it in the violin and piano part in mm. 11–13 (see Example 11).

---

20 Kim, “The Diasporic Composer,” 80–82.
Ex. 11 Isang Yun, *Gasa* for violin and piano, mm. 11–13.

In addition to the twelve-tone technique, Yun directly imitated the theme of J. S. Bach’s *Musical Offering* in his *Königliches Thema* for solo violin (1976) (see Examples 12 and 13).


Yun incorporated this tonal theme in the beginning of the piece, but he varies the chromatic and harmonic language in the seven variations.
Western Styles in Yun’s Violin Concerto (1981)

In his Violin Concerto (1981), Yun followed the traditional Western cycle of movements, fast, slow, and fast, which Yongwhan Kim asserts is a departure from the procedures in his other concertos, and one that more closely approaches formal considerations of Western concertos. 21

Yun himself made programmatic associations for each of the movements: the first movement is a challenge; the second, an elegy and lamentation; and the third, resignation, emancipation, and liberation. 22 The first movement starts with the solo violin’s double stops, while the orchestra accompanies with short accented notes, which are pizzicatos. The beginning of this movement demonstrates the challenge of a solo violin with orchestra. During the violin’s solo, the orchestra supports the solo with pizzicato chords, under the violin’s sustained notes (see Example 14). It seems like an introduction of independent presentations of the solo violin during first few measures. However, the solo violin builds to a more powerful sound and technique towards the end of the movement creating an equal relationship between the solo violin and the orchestra.

---

21 Kim, Isang Yun Study, 352–55.

Unlike the first movement, the second movement starts with soft dynamics, a mood of elegy or lamentation, and a ternary form: A (mm. 1–52), B (mm. 53–60), and A’ (mm. 61–96). The A section starts in tempo $\dot{\text{J}} = \text{ca.} \, 52$ with a lack of vibrato in the strings and tremolos in the flute part, before disappearing dynamically. After nine measures, the violin solo plays a soft $E_b^4$, which is the main tone in the second movement, and $E$-flats are embellished with $Sijo$ singing style in mm. 11–12 (see Example 15).
Ex. 15 Isang Yun, Violin Concerto (1981), second movement, mm. 1–12.

II

Adagio
The B section reaches the climax of this movement with loud dynamics in the orchestra after the highest note of the solo violin with the tempo of $J = \text{ca. } 60$ (see Example 16).

Ex. 16 Isang Yun, Violin Concerto (1981), second movement, mm. 53–55.
The A′ section begins soft with the tempo of $\frac{\text{♩}}{} = \text{ca.} \, 52$, which is the same tempo as the A section (see Example 17), and has a short cadenza part at the movement’s end.

Ex. 17 Isang Yun, Violin Concerto (1981), second movement, mm. 61–63.

In the middle of the A′ section, the cadenza starts very soft with several fermatas, but the sound becomes louder than before. When the violin plays an A6, the cello section accompanies the violin’s melody, and they fade away at the end of the cadenza. Even though the dynamic is very soft, Yun tried to make the cadenza show off violinist’s ability to build up the short phrase from $\text{ppp}$ to $\text{fff}$ and to go down $\text{pppp}$ again (see Example 18).
The third movement presents a traditional Western sonata form, which includes an exposition (mm. 1–45), development (mm. 46–136), and recapitulation (137–52). The exposition starts with the fast tempo marking of $\dot{\text{J}} = \text{ca.} 116$. As Yun made the programmatic references, the solo violin achieves resignation, emancipation, or liberation from the orchestra. In the beginning of the movement, the orchestra and the solo violin play against each other. They clearly present two different parts. The orchestra plays embellished staccatos and chords, and the solo violinist plays repetitive sixteenth notes, creating a juxtaposition between the solo violin and the orchestra (see Example 19).
Ex. 19 Isang Yun, Violin Concerto (1981) third movement, mm. 1–4.
This main theme is repeated at the beginning of the development in m. 46 with a marking of $j = \text{ca. } 96$ (see Example 20), but modified with various tempo changes and a violin cadenza (see Table 1).

Ex. 20 Isang Yun, Violin Concerto (1981), third movement, mm. 44–49.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tempos</th>
<th>Measures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>( \text{\textit{j}} = \text{ca. 96} )</td>
<td>46–65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( \text{\textit{j}} = \text{ca. 60} )</td>
<td>66–86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( \text{\textit{j}} = \text{ca. 72} )</td>
<td>87–84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( \text{\textit{j}} = \text{ca. 112} )</td>
<td>85–96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( \text{\textit{j}} = \text{ca. 96} )</td>
<td>97–118</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( \text{\textit{j}} = \text{ca. 100} )</td>
<td>119–20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( \text{\textit{j}} = \text{ca. 96} )</td>
<td>121–24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( \text{\textit{j}} = \text{ca. 42} )</td>
<td>cadenza</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( \text{\textit{j}} = \text{ca. 60} )</td>
<td>126–36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table. 1 Isang Yun, Violin Concerto (1981), third movement, tempo changes, mm. 46–136.

In the development, Yun’s cadenza showcases the virtuosic ability of the violinist and liberation from the orchestra. The cadenza starts with the soft dynamics in \textit{ppp} with many fermatas and flutter-tonging techniques on G4 and A4, but it becomes very virtuosic with fast arpeggios and double stops with various dynamic changes (see Example 21).
Ex. 21 Isang Yun, Violin Concerto (1981), third movement, cadenza.

After the cadenza, the recapitulation starts with the main theme in m. 137 with a marking of \( \text{j = ca. 96} \), and the violinist plays widely spaced chords instead of arpeggios (see Example 22).
Ex. 22 Isang Yun, Violin Concerto (1981), third movement, mm. 137–39.
At the end of the piece, the solo violinist plays virtuosic passages against the orchestra to achieve a final liberation (see Example 23).
Ex. 23 Isang Yun, Violin Concerto (1981), third movement, mm. 149–52.
Chapter 3

The Influence of Taoism in Yun’s Music

During Yun’s first European period, at the age of forty, he found a way of expressing his own individual musical ideas, which are influenced by Taoism. He has defined this difference between the basic sound concept of West and East:

The tone of Europe and Asian is totally different. I have mentioned several times that the tone of the West is like a liner pencil, while Asian tones are like a stroke of a brush—thick and thin, and not even straight: they carry the possibility of the flexible form.¹

Yun utilized this Eastern thought (flexibility) and the *yin* and *yang* elements as his basic compositional tools in various works.

Taoism Philosophy: Meaning and Origin

Taoism philosophy is an essential part of Isang Yun’s compositional method. He articulated that Taoist thought, especially the concept of *yin* and *yang*, influenced his musical expression. Taoism, along with Buddhism and Confucianism, is one of the three most important East-Asian philosophies. While in Buddhism, the individual strives for a state of eternal happiness and peace after death, and Confucianism focuses on social order of everyday life, and thus contains a social ethic, a political ideology, and a scholarly tradition explaining the way of everyday life, Taoism concentrates on one’s own tranquility in life. Taoism is embodied in Lao-Tzu’s (sixth century BCE) Tao-teaching (literally, the classic “way” and its virtue). His teaching offered several very important elements of Taoism, in which the most important is Tao. Tao is commonly translated as “road” or “pathway,” but historically the word Tao had manifold

meanings depending on context and interpretation.² It refers to universal and specific order, method, and principle. Tao is the mother of all things. It existed before heaven and earth. In its substance, it is invisible, inaudible, vague and elusive, indescribable, and above shape and form. All things in the world come from being, and being comes from non-being. This concept of non-being is basic to Lao-Tzu’s philosophy. In a sense, being and non-being are of equal importance: they complement and produce each other. The notion that everything has its opposite and that these opposites are the mutual causations of each other forms a basic part of Chuang Tzu’s (fourth century BCE) philosophy, which is a later Taoist school. This philosophy treats opposites not in terms of conflict, but rather as complements, which is central to the concept of *yin* and *yang* dualism.

**Yin and Yang Dualism**

*Yin* and *yang* are two opposite characteristics from which change is possible in Taoist philosophy. For instance, Tao is the origin of all transformation and rule, so that Tao is the process of self-transformation. All changes are experienced through variability within invariability, or activity within inactivity. Thus, all changes and transformations are the result of the interaction of the two opposite modes: *yin* and *yang*.

For Isang Yun, Taoist philosophy, and especially *yin* and *yang*, are a stated part of his compositional method. Yun utilized *yin* and *yang* dualism as a compositional tool. *Yin*, “the shady side,” cannot exist without *yang*, “the sunny side.” To have one, it is necessary to have the other. *Yin* can be described as passive, cool, the night, female, negative, and softness; *yang* is

---

active, warm, the day, male, positive, and powerfulness. In speaking of Yun’s music, Andrew McCredie emphasized the coexisting polarities of yin and yang in the context of *I Ching* and how it exists in Yun’s sound world. An appendix to the *I Ching* (Book of changes) mentions “one time yin and one time yang.” *Yin* and *yang* are two complementary, interdependent principles or phases alternating in space and time. The principle of *yin* and *yang* influenced Yun’s musical aesthetics and is embodied in the structure, melody, harmony, dynamics, and in most other aspects of his music as shown in Table 2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Taoist philosophy</th>
<th>Yin</th>
<th>Yang</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Moon</td>
<td>Sun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Water</td>
<td>Fire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>Positive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Passive</td>
<td>Active</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Static</td>
<td>Movement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Softness</td>
<td>Powerfulness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yun’s music</td>
<td>Quiescence</td>
<td>Movement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sustain</td>
<td>Ornamentation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Piano</em></td>
<td><em>Forte</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Decrescendo</em></td>
<td><em>Crescendo</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tension</td>
<td>Relaxation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Flat note</td>
<td>Sharp note</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

3 Ibid., 7–13.


Table 2. Yun’s musical examples of *yin* and *yang*.

Yun described the principle of the *yin* and *yang* as various musical elements. For example, for harmony, Yun highlighted the principle of opposites by combining intervals between consonance and dissonance, which represents *yang* and *yin* respectively. In the first chord of *Shao Yang Yin für Cembalo* (1966), for instance, he used F-sharp, B, and C, which are based on essentially consonant intervals and dissonant intervals (see Example 24). He combined the interval between F-sharp and B as a *yang* principle, and combined between C and B as a *yin* principle.\(^6\)

---

In addition to harmony, the pitch groups are shifting from a lower pitch to a higher pitch, which is also a manifestation of the extremities of the *yin* and *yang*. The low pitch presents the *yang* character, and the high pitch invokes the *yin* character. Dynamics, too, play a role and are associated with pitch. The relatively loud dynamics are connected to the lower range, which represents the *yang* character, and the soft dynamics are associated with the higher pitch range, which represents the *yin* character.

As a general principle of Yun’s orchestration, the contrast of high and low registers and the timbre contrast of woodwinds against strings are manifestations of *yin* and *yang* dualism. The line connecting the extreme high and low registers reflects the Taoist idea denoting heaven and earth. The bass connects the extreme registers, and timbre contrasts might be seen as the

---


8 Ibid.

representation of humanity of the *yin* and *yang*.

Taoism and the *Hauptton* Technique

East Asian philosophy and aesthetics are associated with Taoism and fundamental to the compositional principles and practices of Yun. He emphasized the role of the individual tone, or principle tone, as opposed to a series of fixed pitches in a preordained melodic, harmonic, or serial relationship as in Western music. Further, the extension of this principle is the basic concept of *Hauptton*, which is an embodiment of the *yin* and *yang* polarity.\(^\text{10}\) Yun incorporated the *yin* and *yang* idea of the central tone into his compositions through his personal compositional technique. The *Hauptton* technique can be explained in the sense that it is not a sequence or series of tones, but a principle tone, that is embellished by surrounding tones or tonal inflections. These involved for Yun the spectrum of glissandos, grace notes, trills, vibratos, quarter notes, or microtonal inflections or vacillations, and timbre changes. All ornamentations are accessories to the main tone, but still necessary. In this case, the main tone is ever-present in the long sustained tone as *yang*, yet at the same time surrounded by *yin* with various embellishments.

We can see *Hauptton/Hauptklang* technique in *Fluktuationen* (*Turnover*), which Yun composed in 1964 for orchestra in the series *Musik der Gegenwart* (Modern music). The title, *Fluktuationen* (*Turnover*), itself already embodies the central idea of Taoism as seen in the following conversation with Yun:

Yun: we talk about the piece *Fluktuationen*.

---

\(^{10}\) McCredie, “Isang Yun (1917–1995),” 589.
Rinser: May I take the title literally? “Flowing or streaming.” I think it is meant in the sense of the Taoist “Everything moves, everything changes, but all the movement is movement within the stability.” When I heard this piece for the first time, I had the impression of being taken up in an eternal stream, that stream which flows simultaneously under, over, or in the middle of earthly things. It begins pianississimo, as if people must at first become aware of stream… fortississimo. I see it in the score. At measure 190 then the powerful noise is at an end. It remains at first “fortississimo.” The bassoon, trumpets, horns and trombones, then the strings take over the so-called Hauptklang.\footnote{Quoted in Byeon, “The Wounded Dragon,” 140–42.}

In the beginning of Fluktuationen, the long sustained notes convey the Taoist philosophy of a movement of stillness, of the endless stream, of a forceful and infinite present. The cello plays Haupttons with F♯3 and A♯3, and then the viola (G4 and B4), second violin (E♭4 and F4), and first violin (C5 and D♭5) to build up Haupttons together in mm. 1 and 2 (see Example 25).
In the second part, Yun builds up the dynamics from pianississimo to fortississimo, so that the Hauptton becomes louder with the addition of bassoon, trumpets, horns, and trombones in m. 190 (see Example 26).
Ex. 26 Isang Yun, *Fluktuationen (Turnover)* (1964), mm. 186–90.

Yun’s *Fluktuationen* is one of the pieces in which he reflects the philosophy of Far Eastern traditional musicians. His music, including the Violin Concerto, is well connected to the Taoist way of thinking and opposite musical characteristics of *yin* and *yang*. 
Musical Elements of the *Yin* and *Yang* in Isang Yun’s Violin Concerto (1981)

A. Musical Structure: Quiescence and Movement

Yun utilized the *yin* and *yang* principle by contrasting the sound of the quiescence and movement between the solo violin and orchestra in his Violin Concerto. According to the Chinese Tao philosopher Chou Tun-yi (1017–1073 CE), movement produces the *yang* force and quiescence produces the *yin* force.\(^{12}\) Yun created contrasting qualities with dynamic changes and different melodic motions for the opposite characters of *yin* and *yang* in the Violin Concerto’s first movement (see Example 27). The solo violin produces the *yang* force with strong dynamics and accents, while the string invokes the *yin* force with sustained notes on soft dynamics. Two elements, *yin* and *yang*, are put in opposition, yet combined together.

Ex. 27 Isang Yun, Violin Concerto (1981), first movement, mm. 57–58, solo violin and string parts.

The solo violin and strings represent the *yin* and *yang* dualism later in this first movement as well

---

(see Example 28). The solo violin represents \textit{yang} by way of strong chords and dynamics, the cello and bass present \textit{yin} through soft dynamics and sustained notes.

Ex. 28 Isang Yun, Violin Concerto (1981), first movement, mm. 135–37, solo violin and string parts.

B. Harmony: Balance and Imbalance; Consonance and Dissonance

Within the \textit{yin} and \textit{yang} principle, Yun’s harmony achieves an accord between balance and imbalance. The harmony of consonance exists with dissonant harmony simultaneously. Yun utilized the minor second as a dissonance interval, the \textit{yin} principle, and used the major third as a consonance interval, the \textit{yang} principle, simultaneously in the first eight measures in the beginning of his Cello Concerto (1975/76).\footnote{Walter-Wolfgang Sparrer, “Isang Yun” in \textit{Komponist der Gegenwart}, ed. Walter-Wolfgang Sparrer and Hanns-Werner Heister (Munich: Edition Text & Kritik, 1992), 5.} In his Violin Concerto, there are also alternations between balance and imbalance in many places. For example, in the first movement from m. 110 to m. 112, Yun used a major fifth as a \textit{yang} element in the horn part, but the bassoon plays an augmented fifth and the trumpet plays minor forth as a \textit{yin} element on the third beat of m. 110. In the next measure, the bassoon plays the augmented fifth as a \textit{yin} element while the horn and trumpet plays consonants as a \textit{yang} element (see Example 29). The woodwinds exchange
opposite harmonies to represent the *yin* and *yang* dualism.

Ex. 29 Isang Yun, *Violin Concerto* (1981), first movement, mm. 110–11, woodwind parts.

C. Dynamics with Pitch: Strong Dynamics on the Low Pitch and Soft Dynamic on the High Pitch

In addition to the harmony, the pitch groups are shifting from a low pitch to a high one, which is also a manifestation of the extremities of *yin* and *yang* in the *Shao Yang Yin für Cembalo* (1966).\(^\text{14}\) The low pitch represents the *yang* character, and the high pitch invokes the *yin* character. The dynamics are also associated with pitch. The relatively loud dynamics are connected to the low range, which represent the *yang* character, and the soft dynamics are connected to the high pitch range, which represent the *yin* character.\(^\text{15}\) In the Violin Concerto, Yun employed this *yin* and *yang* dualism in the solo violin part in the second movement (see Example 30). When the violinist plays a low pitch, the melody goes from *f* to *fff*, which produces

\(^{14}\) Koch-Raphael, “Einege Grundsätzliche Anmerkungen” in ibid., 73.

\(^{15}\) Ibid., 73.
the *yang* character. While the violinist plays high pitches, the dynamics are diminuendo and soft, which produces the *yin* character.

Ex. 30 Isang Yun, Violin Concerto (1981), second movement, mm. 67–68, solo violin part.

---

D. Rhythm: Tension and Relaxation

In his Violin Concerto, Yun also contrasted rhythmic tension and relaxation as part of *yin* and *yang* dualism. In the Violin Concerto’s third movement, as a typical feature, Yun presented the rhythmic tension and relaxation clearly between the violin solo with harp accompaniment and the woodwinds with strings (see Example 31). While the solo violinist plays fast arpeggios with harp accompaniment, the orchestra rests. After the solo violinist’s arpeggios, the orchestra plays strong accents with many grace notes. Yun contrasts tension and relaxation between the solo violin and the orchestra by the different textures and rhythms as musical representations of *yin* and *yang*. 
Ex. 31 Isang Yun, Violin Concerto (1981), third movement, mm. 47–49.
E. Melody: Sustain and Ornamentation; Pizzicato and Glissando

In his Violin Concerto, Yun varied melodies between long notes and ornamented notes, which also demonstrate *yin* and *yang* dualism. In the first movement, the solo violin often sustains an E\(^b\)\text{#6} or E6, while other instruments play staccatos, arpeggios, and pizzicato chords (see Example 32), causing a noticeable contrast between the sustained melody and the different accompanimental timbres. The long notes and the glissando in the violin solo are the *yin* element, while the pizzicatos and chords in the strings represent the *yang*.

Ex. 32 Isang Yun, Violin Concerto (1981), first movement, mm. 10–13, harp, solo violin, and string parts.
In his Violin Concerto, Yun sought to represent the Taoist philosophy of *yin* and *yang*. He used *yin* and *yang* elements not only as his main technique, *Hauptton*, but also in the various musical elements, such as harmonies, rhythms, dynamics, pitches, and melodies between the solo violin and orchestra.
Chapter 4

CONCLUSION

During his compositional career, Yun synthesized various Korean instrumental and vocal performance practices within Western techniques and styles. He used performing practices from Korean traditional woodwind instruments, the *Taegum* (bamboo flute) and *Piri* (bamboo oboe), stringed instruments, the *Gayakum* (twelve-zither), *Haegum* (a two-string fiddle), *Komungo* (a plucked instrument), *Yanggum* (dulcimer), and the *Changgo*, a percussion instrument. He also utilized techniques from traditional vocal genres including the *Chongak* for high culture, which its three types of songs—the *Gasa* (long narrative song), *Kagok* (lyric song), and *Sijo* (short lyric song)—and the *Minsokak* for low culture, which includes *Minyo* (folk music) and *Pansori* (one-person singing operas). Along with these Korean techniques, Yun fused his style with Western serial techniques, twelve-tone method, imitation techniques, and various formal considerations.

Yun’s Violin Concerto (1981) is imbued with Korean instrumental and vocal timbres, such as those from the *Piri* and *Gayakum*, and *Sijo*, while maintaining the Western concerto’s cycle of movements (fast-slow-fast), including cadenzas, ternary form for the second movement, and sonata form for the last movement. Yun made programmatic associations between these movements and Western formal considerations: the first movement (fast) is a challenge; the second movement (slow) is an elegy and lamentation; and the third movement (fast) is resignation, emancipation, and liberation. Within this program, he utilized his own technique, *Hauptton*, which consists of ornamentations of a principle tone with various embellishments of Korean timbres, such as a spectrum of glissandos, grace notes, trills, vibratos, and quarter tones.
Furthermore, Yun connected his *Hauptton* technique with its Korean sound to his interest in Taoism. Yun drew especially from the Taoist idea of dualism—*yin* and *yang*—as his main compositional tool, and with the *Hauptton* technique, he presented these opposite characteristics. The main tone (*Hauptton*) is ever-present in the long sustained tone as the *yang*, yet at the same time the elements of *yang* are surrounded by *yin*, which consists of various embellishments. Yun utilized *yin* and *yang* dualism not only with his *Hauptton* technique, but also in other aspects of his varied musical language, such as the opposite characteristics of his harmonies (consonances and dissonances), rhythms (tension and relaxation), dynamics (strong and soft), pitches (low and high), and melodies (sustained and ornamented). As a result, his Violin Concerto exemplifies Isang Yun’s Taoist influence and demonstrates how his style fuses East and West.


