

KOREAN QUARTERLY

Pulse of the earth

Local drummers find a network at Korean samulnori festival

by Martha Vickery

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AUSTRIAN MULTI-CULTURAL MUSIC GROUP EMPLOYS KOREAN RHYTHMS

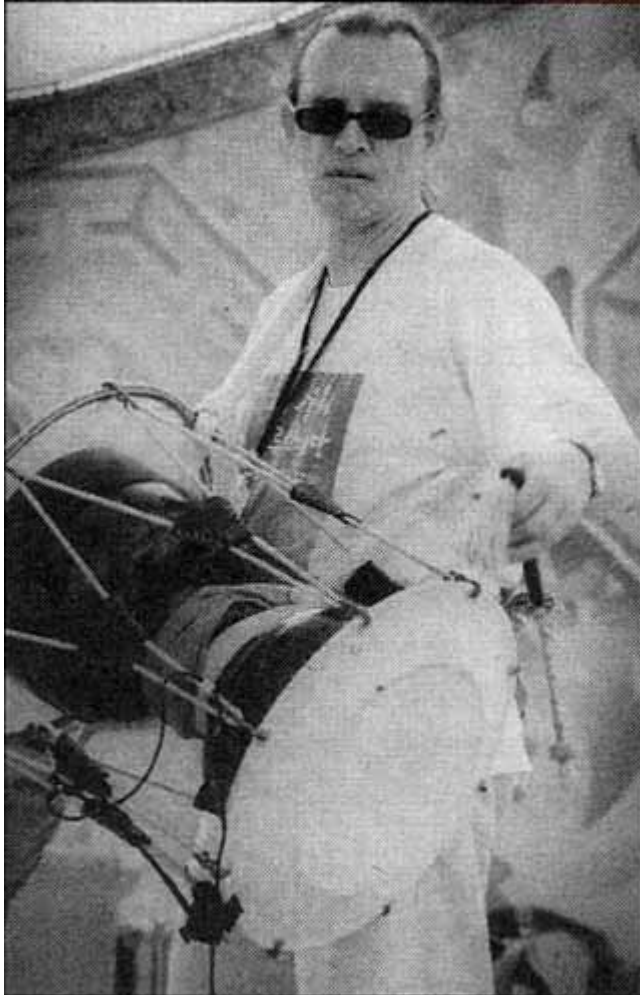
Bernhard Noriller, the Austrian co-founder and one of the minds behind the world music troupe Comin' and Goin', plays the changgo drum, and employs Korean traditional rhythms in performance compositions that include an East Indian dancer, Brazilian drum player, and a didgeridoo player, among other unique elements. SamulNori Hanullim instructor Dong-Won Kim sang and drummed along with the group as a special guest at the Festival.

Noriller was not a contestant in the competition, although he has taken lessons at SamulNori Hanullim on his own in the past. He adapted the changgo drum rhythms to fit the music of Comin' and Goin' which tends toward a jazz fusion style.

Noriller, from the Tyrol region of Austria, started playing electric guitar as a teen. In 1992, he met and received training from percussionist Reinhard Flatischler; who invented what he called the Takatina system of drumming. „He offered three drums, one was the changgo, one was the buk and one was the conga. I saw the changgo, thought it looked interesting and decided I would like to learn it,” he said.

It was difficult to choose an instrument for further study, Noriller remembered. He chose the changgo, but had difficulty learning it. “I had a hard time for two years. ... I always wondered why did I choose this one?” Finally, he began to practice faithfully, and did so every day. He received percussion training from Flatischler for the next five years. “I was influenced by all the other instruments I had ever played and began to develop my own style.”

In 1996, Noriller founded Comin' and Goin' with four other guys, and at first didn't know how to come together with all the different instruments they were playing. "We had one didgeridoo player, one sitar player, a guitar player, saxophone player, my changgo drum and also berimbau, an Afro-Brazilian bow instrument."



Bernard Noriller performs with Comin' and Goin' at the Samulnori Festival in Buyeo.

In 2003, Noriller went to the SamulNori Hanullim workshop in Switzerland, hosted by Susan Nketia, and got to know SamulNori instructor Dong-Won Kim. "I needed new input. I had practiced a lot alone, and had no more new ideas." Out of that association, the band received an invitation in 2003 go to the Samulnori Festival, and after that, in 2004, they were asked to join the World Culture Open. "We went with 15 people. Called it Comin' and Goin' Meets. We invited an Indian dancer to come, and then we asked some friends who have a flamenco group, with a singer from Spain, to come, and asked Kim Dong-Won to join us.

We played a nice jam session the last day, sort of a disco thing, and there were musicians from many different countries and it was all sort of mystical."

Soon after that, Dong-Won Kim went to Innsbruck, Austria, to make a CD with the band. They traded some pieces for each other's CDs. Kim played one traditional song, Arirang, on the album.

Noriller described Kim as "a very tolerant person" who tries to support musicians, whatever their stage of development as drummers. "I did learn some of the traditional rhythms and technique and play different now than I did before. I don't want to learn only the traditional styles, but want to be influenced by all the styles."

The new CD, released in December, is "very much influenced by all our experiences in Korea," he said. "It's a kind of giving back."

At the moment, the band is comprised of seven musicians plus three guest musicians. They have an invitation to play in Dubai in January for a month, another offer to go to China for about 20 concerts. They are also invited to a big artists' symposium in Utah next summer.

Noriller also wants to try for a 'composer in residence' grant that would allow the band to return and create an album at the SamulNori Hanullim school. "We would come not knowing what we are going to compose," he explained. "We would just create it here."

Working with all the different people and backgrounds is challenging for the people of Comin' and Goin'. "We have lots of group dynamics," Noriller said, "but most of us are older, I am 46. Most have lots of experience with different kinds of musical groups. We try to solve problems together. And everybody knows about the vision we have. It influences all our lives. We've all spent a lot of money and a lot of time being able to do this" so they share a determination to make it work, Noriller said.

The new CD by Comin' and Goin' will have influences of many cultures, and as an ironic innovation, some traditional music of Noriller's country of origin, Austria, including some yodeling, which he has never tried before. Ideas come from all over for this band, even from their own back yards. Noriller's motto is "You always have to keep your ears open."

Anmerkung: Mit der neuen CD ist das im Dezember 2005 erschienene dritte Album "Xpressed Impressions" (CSM 051201) gemeint.