

A Taste of Seoul Concludes Our Virtual Home Season



Bereishit Dance Company *BOW_Control* and *Balance and Imbalance* April 8–11, 2021

The word 'Bereishit' תּוֹשָׁאֵרֵב / Genesis comes from the Hebrew word 'Bereishit', the first word in the Torah meaning 'in the beginning'. It is pronounced "BRESH-IT", if you are curious...you can only imagine the pronunciations going around our office since last fall! The company's work focuses on the dynamic relationship related to humanity and sociality. In that sense, the word Bereishit is a symbolic word for humans and the beginning of human civilization. For our final presentation, the program explores the boundaries of sport and dance. Choreographer and Artistic Director Soon-ho Park has created two intensely physical works: *BOW_Control* and *Balance and Imbalance*.

Park draws from many sources including hip-hop and judo, the Japanese martial art. His own dance studies in aikido, Martha Graham, contact improvisation and modern dance influence his works and how he approaches dance creation.

The rigorous male duet, *BOW_Control*, celebrates the clean lines and power of traditional archery, blurring the boundaries between sport, art, and meditation. *BOW_Control* is an exercise tool, a self-reflection tool, a sport, a game, and a meditation. Park uses the deep history of South Korean archery and reflects on the bow as an exercise and as a self-reflection

tool, creating a dance that pulls from the old traditions of South Korea to make something new.

Park is also interested in how sounds affect movement and how we communicate with others. You'll notice that *Balance and Imbalance* includes Pansori (Korean: 판소리), a Korean genre of musical storytelling performed by a singer and a drummer. Park uses pansori to meld forms of past and present. He isn't concerned if you understand the story and can understand the language. Instead, he focuses on the sounds of the pansori and how it affects the movement.

Five dancers, one vocalist, and two janggu (traditional Korean drum) performers interact with the sounds and gestures of the piece to maximize the emotion in *Balance and Imbalance*. To make *Balance and Imbalance*, the choreographer combined Korean percussion (Samulnori), Korean singing (Pansori), Korean folk music, dance and ritual (Pungmul Nori), and Korean philosophy (Chun-Ji-In), sometimes in a modern way.

Samulnori is a genre of percussion music originating in Korea. The word "samul" means "four objects" and "nori" means "play." Samulnori is performed with four traditional Korean musical instruments.

Samulnori (literally "Korean traditional percussion instruments playing") has its roots in Pungmul nori, a Korean folk genre comprising music, acrobatics, folk dance, and rituals, which was traditionally performed in rice farming villages to ensure and celebrate good harvests. Since Korea's people were 90% in farm-related work until modern times, this music defined



Kkwaengmyeon
(a small gong)



Jing
(a larger gong)



Janggu
(an hourglass-shaped drum)



Buk
(a barrel drum, similar to the bongo drum)



Korean folk and popular music.

A poet once described each of the four instruments of Samulnori as representing a different weather condition:

Kkwaenggwari: represents thunder

Jing: the sounds of wind

Janggi: rain

Buk: clouds

Pansori is a Korean genre of musical storytelling performed by a vocalist and a drummer. One singer and one drummer playing a barrel drum called a Buk usually perform the music. Originally a collection of 12 operas, there are now only five that have been passed down to us today. In 2003, UNESCO officially recognized Pansori as an important piece of world culture.

Pansori Sugungga, which is the music in *Balance and Imbalance*, is the old story of 'Tokkijeon,' in opera form. The tale they relay is *Sugungga*, about a dragon king, a turtle, and a rabbit. The opera contains much humorous banter between the characters.

Synopsis of Sugungga

The Dragon King of the Southern Sea is suffering from an ailment that can be cured only with the liver of a rabbit. The king thereupon summons all the ministers to look for the liver of a rabbit on the ground. The terrapin turtle volunteers his service to journey to a forest and return with a rabbit.

The turtle succeeds in doing this by luring the rabbit with the wonderful prospects of living in the palace. The rabbit, after discovering his danger at the palace, coaxes the King into allowing him to return to the forest by explaining that his liver was so much in demand that it

finally became necessary to conceal it in a secret place and that he had, therefore, come without it.

Upon hearing this, the Dragon King of the Southern Sea grants the rabbit permission to go back to the forest with the turtle after the rabbit promises that he will return with his liver. Once in the forest, the rabbit ridicules the King and turtle's stupidity and is never seen again. But the rabbit is also actually quite moved by the turtle's faithfulness to the King.

The pre-show conversation will give you additional insights into what you're about to experience. That conversation will be accessible on Dance Victoria's secure web page for all ticket holders. **FN**

In Conversation with Bereishit Artistic Director Soon-ho Park

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Ticket holders for Bereishit Dance Company have access to a pre-show video conversation between Artistic Director/Choreographer Soon-ho Park (and a translator) and Jacob's Pillow Scholar-in-Residence Maura Keefe. The pre-show video is one of many resources offered on the secure web page. Extras include an "In the Studios" video of works-in-progress by Dance Victoria resident artists, detailed program notes, a virtual cocktail demonstration with Cascadia Liquor, discount offers by local retailers, sponsor messages and more. DanceVictoria.com