

# Changes of North Korean Musical Groups and Cultural Policies<sup>1</sup>

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## I. Introduction

North Korea uses music as a political means to symbolically express and give an impetus to its intentions. As the messenger of such music to the people, there are ‘musical groups’ in North Korea. While the North Korean musical groups are mobilized to achieve the political goal of maintaining the regimes, new musical groups of various forms and types emerged in each regime.

Among those North Korean musical groups, there are the national treasure class musical groups regarded as ‘the examples to all musical groups.’ These musical groups were created as the leaders of applicable regime personally got involved in their creation because of their needs at the time. There are ‘art propaganda groups’ and ‘local art groups’, but the main musical groups of all are the ‘central art groups’ also known as ‘national

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<sup>1</sup> This paper has been written based on the author’s doctoral thesis, ‘North Korean Musical Groups: History and Development (1945~2018)’.

treasure level music groups.’

As the North Korean music groups were the means of propaganda and agitation, their purposes lead towards maintenance of the system, thus there were not enough discussions on various aspects of creation and purpose of the musical groups. Accordingly, it was deemed in this paper that the North Korean musical groups were created to serve political purposes of the times they were created and I intended to identify the features of different musical groups by focusing on their times of creation. In this paper, I will specifically examine which musical groups were created for what purposes as the musical groups were created for political purposes and how the characteristics of their purposes, shapes and genres were related.

The subjects of analysis in this paper are ‘the major musical groups of North Korea.’ In North Korea, musical groups are defined as ‘art groups organized to play music.’<sup>2</sup> Accordingly, I have limited the scope of ‘the major musical groups of North Korea’ to musical performance from the perspective of North Korea and defined ‘the major musical groups of North Korea’, the subject of analysis in this paper, as ‘the groups whose purposes are to play instrumental music or play instrumental music while singing’. Thereafter, I have selected the musical groups called ‘national treasure level music groups’ as the musical groups that could be regarded to represent others.<sup>3</sup> I intend to examine the main causes of creation of the North Korean musical groups based on the aforementioned musical groups.

## **II. Borrowing of the Soviet Model: Building of a Nation and Overcoming a Crisis**

### **1. National Symphony Orchestra: Establishment of Identity in the Early Stage of Nation-building**

North Korea named the period immediately after the liberation of the Korean Peninsula as ‘democratic Chosun building period’. During this period, basic works to build a nation were carried out while various art groups were independently created and became active in the area of music.<sup>4</sup> During that period, the Central Symphony Orchestra, the predecessor of the National Symphony Orchestra, was formed by gathering 31 members of symphony orchestra and 30 members of chorus who were scattered across the cities, including Hamsung,

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<sup>2</sup> Scientific Encyclopedia Publishing Company, ‘Chosun Language Dictionary (the 2nd Edition)’ (Pyeongyang: Scientific Encyclopedia Publishing Company, 2010), p. 1510.

<sup>3</sup> Among these musical groups, 9 musical groups called ‘national treasure level musical groups’ in North Korea, excluding the art groups that include dancing and the concerto groups, were selected as the subjects of analysis to select the music groups with authority and representative nature in North Korea. In North Korea, an object that represents the nation, that is nationally regarded to be important or that is valuable is referred to as ‘national treasure.’ The musical group that the leader is directly involved in its creation and which has authority and representative nature as the central art group is referred to as ‘national treasure level art group,’ ‘national treasure art group’ or ‘exemplary art group.’

<sup>4</sup> Kim Ilsung, “Regarding Organization of Art Groups: in a conversation with the Propaganda Manager of the North Chosun Labor Party Central Organization Committee (October 22, 1945),” the Complete Works of Kim Ilsung 2, (Pyeongyang: Chosun Labor Party Publishing Company, 1992), p. 167.

Cheongjin, Shineuiju, Wonsan, etc., in Pyongyang. In 1965, the Chosun Music said that the foundation ceremony for the Central Symphony Orchestra was held with the attendance of the party's key members on July 4, 1946. However, the Kim Il-sung's Writings said that the Central Symphony Orchestra announced its foundation as it played 'the Song of General Kim Il-sung' as its first revolution hymn during its foundation concert on August 8, 1946.<sup>5, 6</sup>

On August 8, 1946, Kim Il-sung said after the foundation concert of the Central Symphony Orchestra, "regardless of the country or the race, the height of art is an important measure of how advanced the country or the race is in all areas of politics, economy and so on. Building of ethnic culture is an important front of building the new democratic motherland, and quickly advancing the ethnic culture and art is an important task for us who are fighting to create new way of life."<sup>7</sup> From this comment, we can understand that Kim Il-sung held fast to his opinion that art was a measure that showed how advanced a country was. Accordingly, the National Symphony Orchestra could be deemed to have been established during the early stage of building a nation to build the state identity.

The National Symphony Orchestra (the Central Symphony Orchestra at the time) tried to acquire the authority of cultural nation before anyone else by taking the form of symphony orchestra during the early stage of nation. Symphony represents the authority of all music, as it compiles methods of musical expression among forms of music.<sup>8</sup> Each country has a symphony orchestra that represents its own country, and creation of such symphony orchestra means that a nation that had a complete form acquired the authority as a cultural nation, established the national identity and secured an independent musical system. North Korea tried to build itself as a socialist nation, and creation of the National Symphony Orchestra resembled what Soviet Union did when it created the State Academy Symphony Orchestra of USSR (currently, the State Academic Symphony Orchestra of the Russia) in 1936 in the course of building the Soviet Union.<sup>9</sup> The National Symphony Orchestra was the art group that played 'the Song of General Kim Il-sung', the revolution hymn, and 'Aekookga', the national anthem of North Korea, for the first time in North Korea, and such fact shows that North Korea tried to announce that it established the national foundation during the early stage of nation-building and used a symphony orchestra as a symbol of such establishment. The National Symphony Orchestra was used to establish the national foundation, create an atmosphere of nation-building and give an impetus to propagandas and the Party's policies towards the people by emphasizing the national identity during the period of nation-building.

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<sup>5</sup> "Remembering the Path Walked by the National Theaters: the National Symphony Orchestra," the Chosun Music, Vol. 10 (1965), p. 38.

<sup>6</sup> Kim Il-sung, "Musicians and Artists Must Actively Contribute to Building of the New Democratic Chosun: A speech to artists after the foundation concert of the Central Symphony Orchestra (August 8, 1946)," the Kim Il-sung's Writings 2 (Pyongyang: Chosun Labor Party Publishing Company, 1979), pp. 335-336.

<sup>7</sup> The above publication, pp. 335-337.

<sup>8</sup> Park Yonggu, "Basic Form of Symphony Movement," the Chosun Ilbo, January 28, 1946; Cho Yoonyoung, "Why Did the Colonial Chosun Musicians Want to Create an Orchestra: Appearance of Kyungsung Broadcasting (JODK) Orchestra and its meaning," the Ewha Music Papers, Vol. 21 No. 2 (2017), p. 84. Re-quoted.

<sup>9</sup> Kim Wungu, the History of Music (Seoul: Korea Dictionary Research Company, 1996).

## 2. The Exploits National Chorus: Overcoming a Crisis and Strengthening Internal Solidarity

The 1980s was a period when North Korea had to closely observe the rapidly changing internal situation and focus on maintaining its regime, as the socialist bloc collapsed and the Soviet Union was dissolved. Under such circumstances, the death of Kim Il-sung and the natural disaster in 1994 dealt a blow to the overall North Korean economy, and a prolonged food crisis called for 'the March of Ordeal.'<sup>10</sup> At this time, Kim Jungil named the military-first politics as the basic socialist political method through a joint editorial on June 16, 1999.<sup>11</sup>

At this time, the Exploits National Chorus, an art group of male singers which belonged to military, was formed. This musical group was placed under 'the North Korean People's Army Concerto Group' when the Concerto Group was established on February 22, 1947, received the name of 'the Exploits National Chorus' in 1992 and held its own art form based on chorus by the order of Kim Jungil in November 1995.<sup>12</sup> Since the first chorus music concert on December 24, 1995, the Exploits Chorus presented 'the Eternal Song of Victory,' the 44th victory anniversary concert on July 27, 1997. In the fall of 1997, the Exploits Chorus was separated from the North Korean People's Army Concerto Group and independently presented concerts at the Mansudae Art Theater.<sup>13, 14</sup> It can be deemed that the Exploits Chorus was established as an independent art group from this time.<sup>15</sup>

North Korea encouraged groupism-based chorus to utilize the dignity and firmness of large-scale male chorus that belonged to the North Korean People's Army. Kim Jungil explained the background of establishing the Exploits National Chorus by saying, "when the whole country shed tears of blood after it lost its supreme leader, I ordered for conversion of the chorus that used to belong to the People's Army Concerto Group into an independent, elite art group and that the chorus shall be dedicated to creation and presentation of chorus to arouse the soldiers and the people with the songs of revolution that give us trust and optimism."<sup>16</sup> About the North Korean People's Army Exploits Chorus, Kim Jungil said, "during the March of Ordeal and the Hard March and even now, the North Korean People's Army Exploits Chorus is giving me a great deal of strength,"

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<sup>10</sup> Wada, Haruki, *the North Korean Modern History* (Paju: Changbi, 2014), p. 246-247.

<sup>11</sup> "The Military-first Politics of Our Party is Victorious and Invincible," *the Rodong Sinmun*, June 16, 1999.

<sup>12</sup> "The World-class Exploits Chorus," *the Chosun Art*, Vol. 12 (2001), p. 8.

<sup>13</sup> Song Myungnam, "Chosun's Cultural Policies and Lives of the People Examined through <the Moranbong Musical Group>," *Chosun University News*, Vol. 25 (2015), p. 153.

<sup>14</sup> Kim Jungil was said to have provided a bus and a dining car to the Exploits Chorus, so that the Chorus can follow 'the supreme commander' and engage in artistic activities in the front line and the rear. Jung Taebong, "the Immortal Achievement of Our Respectable General Raising the North Korean People's Army Exploits Chorus as the Trumpeter of Military-first Politics during the March of Ordeal and the Hard March," *the Kim Il-sung University News (History and Law)*, Vol. 48, No. 1(2002), p. 14.

<sup>15</sup> Thereafter, the Exploits Chorus was promoted to 'the North Korean People's Army Exploits Chorus' on June 27, 2000 and to 'the North Korean People's Army National Exploits Chorus' in 2004. The name was changed to 'the Exploits National Chorus' in 2008 and the Chorus is active under the changed name until now. Song Myungnam, "Chosun's Cultural Policies and Lives of the People Examined Through <the Moranbong Musical Group>," *Chosun University News*, Vol. 25 (2015), p. 154.

<sup>16</sup> "Comrade Kim Jungil, the esteemed leader, taught us about the creative performances of the North Korean People's Army Exploits Chorus," *the Chosun Literature and Art Yearbook* (2001) (Pyongyang: Literature and Art Publishing Company, 2002), p. 79.

and “if Bocheonbo Electronic Musical Group or Wangjaesan Light Musical Group were a light weapon, the North Korean People’s Army Exploits Chorus is a heavy weapon.”<sup>17</sup> Based on such comments, we can understand that the light music group and the military chorus were used for different purposes. The dignity of military and the strong image of large-scale male chorus established on the format of groupism-based chorus was an effective format when North Korea tried to achieve internal unity and overturn the situation in the difficult internal circumstances, such as the March of Ordeal.

The Exploits National Chorus used to belong to the North Korean People’s Army Concerto Group established in 1947, but it was newly founded independent of the existing musical group during the March of Ordeal. In times of difficult internal situation, North Korea made the Exploits National Chorus independent, actively encouraged the songs with messages of overcoming difficulties and created an atmosphere of overcoming the national crisis. Chorus, among the forms of vocal music, is a creature of the groupism. The Exploits National Chorus showed similarities to the Aleksandrov Ensemble, as known as the Red Army Choir, established on October 12, 1928 and active in Russia.<sup>18</sup> The Red Army Choir consists of large-scale chorus, orchestra and dance company, and uses traditional Russian musical instruments, such as balalaika, bayan, etc.<sup>19</sup> The instrumental music of the Exploits National Chorus took the form of orchestra. As the Red Army Choir does, it has large-scale military chorus and orchestra that uses a North Korean traditional musical instrument called aeungum. The Exploits National Chorus shows many similarities to its Soviet model in various aspects, such as nature of musical group, organization of musical instrument, repertory and concept.

In this manner, the Exploits National Chorus attempted to emphasize solemn and majestic atmosphere through a large-scale male military chorus. Also, North Korea tried to marshal the people when it was necessary to tip the balance at the time of crisis caused by political shift and changes in socio-political environment with the power of unity and the communal character of chorus.

### **III. Transformation of Classical Music: Formalization of Succession System and Building of a Civilized Socialist Nation**

#### **1. Samjiyeon Musical Group and Eunhasu Orchestra: Formalization of Succession System**

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<sup>17</sup> “Comrade Kim Jungil, the esteemed leader, highly appreciated the North Korean People’s Army Exploits Chorus,” the Chosun Literature and Art Yearbook (2001) (Pyeongyang: Literature and Art Publishing Company, 2002), p. 71.

<sup>18</sup> This Choir held concerts a few times in North Korea. It participated in the 16th Spring in April Friendship Art Festival and presented <the Song of General Kim Il-sung> and <the Song of General Kim Jungil>, as well as the songs from the Soviet Union period, the Russian folk songs and the Russian dances, including <a Fight for Justice>, <Kalinka>, <Katyusha>, <Moscow Nights>, etc. Thereafter, it visited Pyongyang and held further concerts from September 8 to 17, 2004. “The Immortal Revolution Hymns Resonating in the Festival Stage: The Red Army Choir from Russia,” the Music World, Vol. 25 (1998), p. 32-33; Literature and Art Publishing Company, the Chosun Literature and Art Yearbook 2005 (Pyeongyang: Literature and Art Publishing Company, 2008), p. 546.

<sup>19</sup> The official website of Aleksandrov Ensemble; <http://alexandrov-fond.ru/ensemble/>

North Korea pushed ahead with its first nuclear test on October 9, 2006, which caused the UN Security Council to unanimously adopt a resolution against North Korea and the international society to enforce strong sanctions against North Korea. Kim Jungil suffered from a health trouble in the midst of these trends in 2008, and North Korea was forced to urgently prepare the succession system. Accordingly, North Korea intended to create a new musical group to build the image of its newly selected successor. At the time, the electronic music of electronic bands had long declined worldwide. North Korea was aware of it and presented the classical music which started to emerge as the new trend since 2000, as the western music performers played active roles in the international stages as the main musical groups.

Samjiyeon Musical Group and Eunhasu Orchestra, the new musical groups pursued semi-classical music by transforming the classical music and applying it to the form of orchestra, one of the forms of classical music. First, Samjiyeon Musical Group under Mansudae Art Group (“Samjiyeon Musical Group”) was the musical group established by Kim Jungil himself on January 16, 2009, and (North Korea) commented that “the Snow Whites of Mansudae Art Group whose names were widely known in the 1970s have gathered the people’s attention in the new image in the new century.<sup>20</sup> It is Samjiyeon Musical Group that bloomed as the new flower of Juche (self-reliance) art.”<sup>21</sup> Here, the ‘Snow Whites of Mansudae Art Group’ was another name of the Exploit Female Instrumental Music Group, and we can understand that the Exploit Female Instrumental Music Group of Mansudae Art Group was reorganized into Samjiyeon Musical Group. The Rodong Sinmun introduced the musical group saying “when you hear the name, ‘Samjiyeon Musical Group,’ you can imagine the beautiful landscape of vicinity of Samjiyeon Pond located in the foot of the Baekdoosan Mountain, the holy mountain of revolution, and the music of Samjiyeon Musical Group is so fresh and distinctive that it will invite you to the mystery of art.” When noticed that the newspaper used the words such as ‘the foot of the Baekdoosan Mountain’ and ‘the vicinity of Samjiyeon Pond’, we can understand that the musical group was named to remind people the former anti-Japan battlefield.<sup>22</sup>

Eunhasu Orchestra took the center stage for the first time at the New Year Celebration Concert held as a joint concert with the Exploits National Chorus, the National Symphony Orchestra and Mansudae Art Group on January 26, 2009, even before it was officially created. The Rodong Sinmun commented about Eunhasu Orchestra by saying “modern harmony and fast tempo were harmoniously mixed with our national music to create an ideal music suitable for demands and tastes of the people in the new century. Also, the Group preserved our independent cultural basis and national foundation while perfectly coinciding with the directions and trends of modern times.”<sup>23</sup> It is told that ‘eunhasu (milky way)’ in Eunhasu Orchestra is another name of Kim Jungeun in North Korea. The following is an article in the Kim Ilsung University News about the successor

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<sup>20</sup> ‘Samjiyeon,’ the name in Samjiyeon Musical Group, is a former anti-Japan battlefield located in Samjiyeon-eup, Samjiyeon-gun, Yanggang-do, and it is called ‘Samjiyeon,’ because it consists of three (‘sam’) pieces (‘ji’) of pond (‘yeon’). <<http://www.cybernk.net>>

<sup>21</sup> “In Celebration of 40th Anniversary of Mansudae Art Group, the Art Group that Bloomed in the Flower Garden of Juche Art Under the Careful Hand of the Mighty Party,” the Rodong Sinmun, September 27, 2009.

<sup>22</sup> “An Impressive Concert that Presented How Juche Musical Art Has Developed: After seeing the performances of Samjiyeon Musical Group of Mansudae Art Group,” the Rodong Sinmun, May 17, 2009.

<sup>23</sup> “Revolutionary and adventurous spirit of creation,” the Rodong Sinmun, January 15, 2013.

issue:

“The issue of succeeding the great achievements of revolution is essentially the issue of successor who succeeds the status and role of the political leader. Correctly selecting the successor of the leader is an essential issue that will determine the fate of solving the issue of succeeding the great achievements of revolution. (omitted) In the late July of Juche 98 (2009), the great General instructed to commanders and members of People’s Army that comrade Kim Jungeun was completely well-versed in all areas of revolution and construction, including politics, economy, culture, science and technology - in summary, comrade Kim Jungeun was good at both literary and martial arts. (omitted) Our military and the people have admired and followed the General endlessly as they were enchanted by the greatness of our beloved comrade Kim Jungeun and uniformly wished to have an honor of appointing him as the successor of comrade Kim Jungil, the great leader...”<sup>24</sup>

As we can find out from the above statement, the people started to seriously mention Kim Jungeun as the successor in Korea from 2009. Under such context, Eunhasu Orchestra that appeared in 2009 can be deemed as a musical group created to establish a power base for Kim Jungeun, the successor.

Samjiyeon Musical Group and Eunhasu Orchestra had been organized basically in the form of orchestra, but Eunhasu Orchestra showed a different composition than usual through the new form of performance, ‘the pops orchestra.’ Eunhasu Orchestra was the mixed orchestra where the usual musical instruments for an orchestra and some North Korean traditional musical instruments were mixed. Also, Eunhasu Orchestra partially showed the format of big band by including the saxophone sextet (Lee Cheolhoon, Song Yongkook, Kim Hyungil, Hwang Seungcheol, Lee Woong and Kim Sungkook) together with electronic musical instruments.<sup>25</sup> We can find a part similar to the music of Glenn Miller Orchestra, one of the most well-known big band, from Eunhasu Orchestra’s pieces - the melody in the introduction part of ‘I Planted a Golden Tree the Apple Tree in the Mountain’ (one of Eunhasu Orchestra’s saxophone sextet pieces) sampled the main melody in the introduction part of ‘In the Mood’ of Glenn Miller.

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<sup>24</sup> Oh Ryongsung, “Chosun Labor Party, the Creator of Global Example of Solving the Issue of Succeeding the Great Achievements of Revolution”, the Kim Il-sung University News (History and Law), 2016, Pyeongyang: Kim Il-sung University Publishing Company, Vol. 62, No. 4, 31-33.

<sup>25</sup> Big band refers to ‘a large band that plays jazz or dance music.’ It consists of three sections including brass (trumpet and trombone), lead (clarinet and saxophone) and rhythm (piano, guitar, bass and drums), and has 15 to 20 musicians in total. cf.; Editorial Department of Samho Music, the Classic Music Terminology Dictionary (Seoul: Samho Music, 2001), p. 190.

<Picture 1> The Main Melody in the Introduction Part of ‘In the Mood’ of Glenn Miller



Source: <http://www.akbobada.com/pdf.html?partID=34280&bought=0>

Samjiyeon Musical Group was so similar to the Paul Mauriat Grand Orchestra that it was said to have formed its music and concept based on the Paul Mauriat Grand Orchestra, the French light orchestra.<sup>26</sup> The European light music became popular in Japan as the Paul Mauriat Grand Orchestra was active in Japan in the 1990s, and such musical trend was applied to the North Korean music. Samjiyeon Musical Group taking the form of orchestra mainly consisting of the western musical instruments and having the classic light music repertory were related to the big success the Paul Mauriat Grand Orchestra had from its world tour, especially from its tour of Korea, in the late 1990s. At the time, various classic light music repertory became popular due to the concert of Paul Mauriat Grand Orchestra in Korea, and North Korea must have recognized such trend of instrumental music and intended to apply the changing trend.<sup>27</sup>

## 2. Samjiyeon Orchestra: Improvement of Global Image for Building of Civilized Socialist Nation

North Korea announced that it completed the development of nuclear arsenal and commented that it wished to participate in the Pyeongchang Winter Olympics and improve the inter-Korean relationship in its New Year’s greetings in 2018.<sup>28</sup> A number of negotiations took place between North Korea and South Korea thereafter, and a special concert by North Korean artist group was scheduled in association with the 2018 Pyeongchang Winter Olympics.<sup>29</sup> Samjiyeon Orchestra was the musical group featured in the Special Concert by Samjiyeon

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<sup>26</sup> The Paul Mauriat Grand Orchestra is a musical group established in 1965. It is an orchestra with electronic musical instruments and plays easy listening music from various genres, including classic, pop, OST, etc. The Paul Mauriat Grand Orchestra moved from Phillips label to Pony Canyon label (of Japan) in 1994 and became popular in Japan - it held its 30th anniversary concert in Tokyo and a concert in Osaka in 1998.

<sup>27</sup> セルジュ・エライク, 山崎俊明 訳, ポール・モーリア (東京: 南部全司, 2008), p. 238-286.

<sup>28</sup> “New Year’s Greeting,” the Rodong Sinmun, January 1, 2018.

<sup>29</sup> Inter-Korean discussions, including the working level meetings, took place with regard to this event. In the inter-Korean working level meeting for dispatch of North Korean artist group on January 15, the two countries discussed about the North Korean artist group having concerts in Gangneung and Seoul in association with the Pyeongchang Winter Olympics. Kwon



Orchestra in association with the 2018 Pyeongchang Winter Olympics and appeared for the first time in the course of working level meeting for the visit by North Korean artist group. North Korea mentioned this Orchestra for the first time, as it disclosed a picture of Kim Jungeun and the members of Samjiyeon Orchestra together in the Rodong Sinmun on February 13, 2018.<sup>30</sup>

Until Samjiyeon Orchestra was confirmed as the artist group who would visit South Korea for the special concert in association with the Pyeongchang Winter Olympics, its name had not been mentioned in North Korea, and many musical groups that were active until then had been included as the members of the Orchestra. Thus, some suggested that Samjiyeon Orchestra could have been a joint concert team. However, after its visit to South Korea, North Korea renovated the Moranbong Circus Theater, the base of the North Korean People's Army Circus Group, into 'the Samjiyeon Orchestra Theater,' a theater dedicated to Samjiyeon Orchestra, on October 10, 2018 in celebration of the 73rd anniversary of the Labor Party.<sup>31</sup> Thereafter, Samjiyeon Orchestra emerged as the new exemplary musical group as it carried out major internal events and external concerts.

'The Samjiyeon Orchestra Theater' has a very important meaning to Samjiyeon Orchestra. Park Gwangho, the Deputy Chairman of the Labor Party Central Committee said in his speech during the opening ceremony of the Samjiyeon Orchestra Theater on October 10, 2018, "the modern base of cultural and emotional life and the exemplary theater which materializes the sublime view of the Chosun Labor Party towards the people," "the art theater with the best sound condition," and "the hall of modern culture and art where the people and the artists can freely create music and art and enjoy elegant and civilized cultural and emotional life." And demanded that "the workers, the creators and the artists of Samjiyeon Orchestra shall never forget the intention and the expectation of the Party that provided this excellent base of revolutionary artistic activity; lead the new era of Juche art with high ability and skill; and encourage our people to strongly march forward to build our fatherland into a rich and strong country." Hyun Songwol, the director of Samjiyeon Orchestra, emphasized that the Samjiyeon Orchestra Theater was the theater that represented North Korea by saying, "each country has its own theater that boasts the country's architectural beauty and civilization. However, there will be no theater as elegant and splendid as this theater given to us by the esteemed supreme leader, comrade Kim Jungeun" during the resolution discussion.<sup>32</sup>

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Hyukbong, the head of Art Performance Department of Ministry of Culture; Hyun Songwol, the director of Samjiyeon Orchestra; Kim Soonho, the administrative deputy director of Samjiyeon Orchestra; and Ahn Jungho, the stage director of artist group, all from North Korea, participated in this meeting. "North Korean artist group to have concerts in Gangneung and Seoul in association with the Pyeongchang Winter Olympics," Ministry of Unification (press release), January 15, 2018;

<[https://www.unikorea.go.kr/unikorea/news/release/?boardId=bbs\\_000000000000004&mode=view&cntId=54370&category=&pageIdx=12](https://www.unikorea.go.kr/unikorea/news/release/?boardId=bbs_000000000000004&mode=view&cntId=54370&category=&pageIdx=12)>

<sup>30</sup> "Our esteemed supreme leader, comrade Kim Jungeun, met the members of Samjiyeon Orchestra who returned from their successful congratulatory concert in an area in the South and took a picture with them," the Rodong Sinmun, February 13, 2018.

<sup>31</sup> The Moranbong Circus Theater built in the 1960s was referred to as 'the monumental building' and used as the theater dedicated to the North Korean People's Army Circus Group. "Our esteemed supreme leader, comrade Kim Jungeun, gave local guidance to the Samjiyeon Orchestra Theater, which is soon to open," the Rodong Sinmun, October 11, 2018.

<sup>32</sup> "The People's Hall of Culture and Art Where the Socialist Civilization is Condensed: The opening ceremony carried out for the Samjiyeon Orchestra Theater, the theater newly renovated by the benevolent affection of the Party to become the

North Korea emphasizes that this theater was ‘the live theater.’ When describing the live theater, they said ‘a live amphitheater with some 1,200 seats without any amplifier system at all.’ Thus, ‘the live theater’ can be deemed as the theater that presented unprocessed pure sound without any amplifier system, such as microphones, etc., in the theater’s sound environment or the space that produced the pure sounds of orchestra or musical instruments and that was the theater equivalent to the acoustic theater.

The Samjiyeon Orchestra Theater was ‘the exemplary theater to materialize the people’s cultural and emotional demands and serve the people’s cultural and emotional living conditions in accordance with direction and demand of the times.’ By building the Samjiyeon Orchestra Theater which had the characteristics of ‘live theater’ and which was a world-class theater, North Korea intended to satisfy the conditions for civilized cultural life and created a world-class theater exclusively for the Orchestra. Kim Jungeun announced that he gave a grand piano to the Samjiyeon Orchestra Theater in celebration of the Theater’s opening on the anniversary of the Labor Party. Kim Jungeun emphasized that “although Samjiyeon Orchestra is still young, it won a reputation in and out of the country by successfully carrying out many concerts on behalf of the country with unique face of its own in a short period of time. Samjiyeon Orchestra must continue to aloft the Labor Party’s ideas and policies related to literature and art; actively engage in passionate and sophisticated artistic creation; and serve our country with all its heart and strength.” In this comment, Kim Jungeun referred North Korea as ‘our country.’ When North Korea refers to itself, it generally uses ‘our fatherland,’ ‘our Party’ and ‘our nation.’ However, Kim Jungeun’s use of ‘our country’ coincided with the goal of ‘construction of the civilized socialist country’ North Korea presented.

#### **IV. Application of Global Trend: The Musical Groups that Represent the Leaders**

##### **1. Wangjaesan Light Musical Group and Bocheonbo Electronic Musical Group: The Musical Groups that Represent Kim Jungil**

Kim Jungil was officially appointed as the successor at the 6th Congress of the Labor Party in October 1980 and began his political career in earnest. At that time, he selected a great number of Mankyungdae Revolution School alumni as the members of the Party’s Central Committee to succeed the anti-Japan partisans who advocated the Kim Ilsung regime. Based on the support from those he selected, Kim Jungil started to build new social and political backgrounds.<sup>33</sup> In such atmosphere, Kim Jungil planned a new kind of musical group which would represent him in the areas of music and art and introduced the electronic music in earnest to build the new regime and his own achievements.

Wangjaesan Light Musical Group was founded on July 22, 1983 for the purpose of ‘developing the light music and modern dance in our way’ under the background of “developing the light music and dance more

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example of all theaters in our country,” the Rodong Sinmun, October 11, 2018.

<sup>33</sup> Kim Okja, “Study on Establishment of Mankyungdae Revolution School and Development of Core Talents,” North Korean Studies Society, Vol. 18, No. 1 (2014), pp. 115-136.

modernly in line with the reality which had been developed further as we entered the 1980s and the aesthetic and emotional needs of the people.”<sup>34, 35</sup> From the aforementioned statement, we can understand that ‘the reality which had been developed further’ and ‘the aesthetic and emotional needs of the people’ represented what was ‘modern’, and Wangjaesan Light Musical Group was the result of materializing what was ‘modern.’ The light musical group was the form of Wangjaesan Light Musical Group and it appeared for the first time in North Korea. Since Wangjaesan Light Musical Group adopted ‘popular musical instruments’ and took ‘the songs or the folk songs the workers liked’ as materials, it could be deemed that North Korea started to consider popularity when creating music.<sup>36</sup>

The name of musical group, ‘Wangjaesan,’ is the name of a mountain in Wangjaesan-ri, Onsung-gun, Hamkyungbuk-do, which is one of the major revolutionary historic sites of North Korea that suggested the strategy intended to domestically expand the armed resistance against Japan on March 11, 1933.<sup>37</sup> Kim Jungil tried to gain his ground by introducing the electronic music which was the global trend at the time as the symbol of the successor’s new regime. At this time, he tried to give high credit to the anti-Japan revolutionary force by naming the musical group with ‘Wangjaesan,’ which could symbolically show that the tradition of anti-Japan revolution was succeeded. It had not been long since Kim Jungil became the official successor, most of the core political forces were from anti-Japanese partisan background, and Kim Jungil did not have full control of the power with his own aides. Hence, he tried to continue on the tradition of anti-Japan revolution in the name of Wangjaesan Light Musical Group because he was conscious of the older veterans who were conservative about introducing the new music.

Wangjaesan Light Musical Group was founded in 1983. However, it was not officially active then, and the official media did not mention its name either. In 1985, Kim Jungil pointed out that the country did not develop the light music in the area of culture and art, and presented ‘the plan for prompt development of the light music’ which emphasized need and direction of the people, issue of selecting artists and achieving modernity based on national characteristics.<sup>38</sup> Under such context, we can understand that when Wangjaesan Light Musical Group was founded, it was not able to produce strong enough results in terms of the light music for it to be officially introduced. Accordingly, we can assume that Wangjaesan Light Musical Group went through preparatory courses, such as various trials, practices and training courses on electronic music, until 1989.

North Korea started to officially introduce Wangjaesan Light Musical Group since 1989. In 1989, the Rodong Sinmun reported that Wangjaesan Light Musical Group held a comprehensive concert at the East Pyeongyang

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<sup>34</sup> The above publication, p. 510.

<sup>35</sup> Social Science Publishing Company, Chosun Encyclopedia 29 (Pyeongyang: Encyclopedia Publishing Company, 2001), p. 510.

<sup>36</sup> Chosun Language Unabridged Dictionary defined the light music as “a light, cheerful and optimistic music in concise form played by a relatively small sized musical group that consists of popular musical instruments. Usually the songs or the folk songs preferred by the workers are arranged and played.” Social Science Publishing Company, Chosun Language Unabridged Dictionary 1 (Pyeongyang: Social Science Publishing Company, 1992), p.198.

<sup>37</sup> Social Science Publishing Company, Chosun Encyclopedia 29, p. 511.

<sup>38</sup> Literature and Art Publishing Company, the Chosun Literature and Art Yearbook 1986 (Pyeongyang: Literature and Art Publishing Company, 1987), pp. 56-58.

Grand Theater on the 28th as a part of the host country program for the 13th World Festival of Youth and Students.<sup>39</sup> With this as a momentum, Wangjaesan Light Music Group began its activities in earnest. North Korea tried to materialize national feature and modern beauty through Wangjaesan Light Musical Group. Thus, Kim Jungil ordered for creation of songs that reflect the sentiments of the people and can be sung in everyday life - such arrangement was made because there were too many revolution songs coherently inspired revolution until then, and popular songs that reflected the lives of people were absent.<sup>40</sup> Also, such arrangement could be interpreted as a result of considering the changed sentiments and cultural level of the people, as the level of their contact with the foreign culture increased after hosting of the 13th World Festival of Youth and Students in 1989.

Bocheonbo Electronic Musical Group announced that it was created by Kim Jungil himself on June 4, 1985 to create new and modern electronic music suitable for the people's sentiments and emotions 'in our way' after he recognized "the global trend and the reality of musical development in North Korea."<sup>41, 42</sup> After Kim Jungil was officially appointed as the successor at the 6th Congress of Labor Party in October 1980, he started to establish new social and political backgrounds based on the anti-Japan partisan force.<sup>43</sup> At this time, he planned a new musical group that would show his achievements as the successor, establish the new regime of his own and represent him. However, Kim Jungil was not in full control of power at the time, and it was possible that introduction of the new music did not receive enough momentum because of resistance against the foreign musical elements. Being conscious of the older generation, Kim Jungil attempted to hand down the traditionality by using 'Bocheonbo,' the name of a former anti-Japan battlefield, to name the musical group so that he could introduce the electronic music and appeal the creation of new light musical group. By doing so, he tried to praise the contributions of the revolutionary force and magnify the symbolism of revolutionary tradition.<sup>44</sup> Hence, he was able to introduce the new musical form called electronic musical instrument according to the global trend of music, and such series of processes could be deemed as a strategy for him to build himself as the rightful successor and win the support from the older generation.

Wangjaesan Light Musical Group did introduce the electronic music, but as a demonstration. Although Bocheonbo Electronic Musical Group was founded later than Wangjaesan Light Musical Group, it brought the electronic music to the forefront and presented the electronic music as its typical feature. The two musical

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<sup>39</sup> "Colorful Art Performances Held," the Rodong Sinmun, June 30, 1989.

<sup>40</sup> Kim Jungil said, "the people today demand for many more songs that reflect their emotional life as they are no longer worried about the necessities of life and their level of cultural life has become higher. (omitted) We must have songs for various occasions of the workers' life, such as songs about single woman, songs about women, songs about children, congratulatory songs for brides and grooms to be sung during weddings, songs to celebrate one's 60th birthday, and so on. "Literature and Art Publishing Company, the Chosun Literature and Art Yearbook 1990 (Pyeongyang: Literature and Art Publishing Company, 1991), p. 15.

<sup>41</sup> When Bocheonbo Electronic Musical Group was created, it was known as 'Bocheonbo Electronic Musical Group.' However, it was reported as 'Bocheonbo Light Musical Group' when it toured Japan for a concert in 1991. Later, the Group was called 'Bocheonbo Electronic Musical Group' again from 1992.

<sup>42</sup> "The Immortal Achievement for Development of Chosun-style Electronic Music," the Chosun Art, Vol. 8 (2004), p. 28.

<sup>43</sup> Kim Okja, "Study on Establishment of Mankyungdae Revolution School and Development of Core Talents," pp. 115-136.

<sup>44</sup> Bocheonbo located in Bocheon-eup, Bocheon-gun, Yanggang-do, North Korea is where the Bocheonbo Battle took place on June 4, 1937. The anti-Japan partisan soldiers fought in the Bocheonbo Battle. Social Science Publishing Company, Chosun Language Unabridged Dictionary 1, p. 1424.

groups acted as the musical groups attached to Kim Jungil and led the new musical style of North Korea taking the lead of Juche literature and art during the Kim Jungil period. Kim Jungil made the following speech to the music and art creators and the artists:

“We must consider the global trend on tools and formats of performance. Just because we are to develop music in our own way, we must not ignore the global trend of musical development. (omitted) The same applies to the electronic musical groups. As the global electronic industry rapidly advances today, so many musical instruments using electronic technology are being introduced, and so are the electronic musical groups who professionally use those instruments. (omitted) In fact, the electronic musical instruments are products of the latest scientific technology. And the electronic musical instruments provide advantages to the musicians as the musicians can adjust tone, sound and rhythm of the instruments as they see fit and play music in a more colorful and broader manner than they could with general musical instruments. The electronic musical instruments and the electronic music have not been around for a long time, but they are spreading globally because the electronic musical instruments have advantages. We do not need to reject the electronic musical instruments or the electronic music.”<sup>45</sup>

At the time, the global electronic industry was growing, and the electronic music was one of the major trends of popular music. Kim Jungil paid attention to the fact that the electronic musical instruments could make a variety of expressions technologically. Thus, he recognized that the electronic music was leading the global trend and tried to accept it in terms of tools and formats of performance. It was an attempt to project the new image of successive regime and fortify the position in the areas of culture and art with the new attempt in the course of building himself as the successor.

## **2. Moranbong Electronic Musical Group and Cheongbong Musical Group: The Musical Groups that Represent Kim Jungeun**

After the death of Kim Jungil on December 17, 2011, Kim Jungeun became the supreme leader through the power transfer process that had been rapidly carried out.<sup>46, 47</sup> Kim Jungeun founded Moranbong Musical Group

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<sup>45</sup> Kim Jungil, “On Improving and Strengthening Musical Creation and Propagation Projects: Conversation with the music and art creators and the artists (December 8, 1990),” the Kim Jungil Collection Vol. 10 (Pyeongyang: Chosun Labor Party Publishing Company, 1997), pp. 440-470.

<sup>46</sup> “On the Day when the Supreme Leader, Comrade Kim Jungil, Deceased: Announcement to all party members, soldiers of North Korean People’s Army and the people,” the Rodong Sinmun, December 20, 2011.

to announce the inauguration of his regime.<sup>48</sup> At this time, he used the term, ‘Moranbong,’ which Kim Jungil liked while he was alive, to emphasize that the Moranbong Electronic Musical Group inherited Bocheonbo Electronic Musical Group.<sup>49</sup> Hence, Moranbong Musical Group announced the start of the new regime and severed the purpose of justifying Kim Jungeun’s succession of power by securing legitimacy. The Kim Jungeun regime, the new regime that came after the death of Kim Jungil, created Moranbong Musical Group as the representative musical group to build a new image and strengthen its hold of power.

Moranbong Electronic Musical Group is a small musical group consists of the electronic string instruments. It consists of 17 artists, including 6 singers and 11 musicians (electronic string quartet, synthesizer (2), saxophone, piano, drum and electronic guitar (2)).<sup>50</sup> Moranbong Electronic Musical Group is based on the electronic musical instruments, as Bocheonbo Electronic Musical Group did in the past. However, all members of Moranbong Electronic Musical Group are women and the Group’s performances are led mainly by the electronic string quartet (electronic violin, electronic viola and electronic cello). The Group has no brass instrument or traditional instrument, while piano and other percussion instruments are added.<sup>51</sup> During the Group’s performances, the electronic string quartet becomes the core of Moranbong Electronic Musical Group as the quartet is positioned in the center behind the vocal music group or in a separate stage.

The electronic string quartet of Moranbong Electronic Musical Group is quite similar to the British female electronic string quartet, ‘Bond,’ which was popular in the 2000s, in terms of concept and music. ‘Bond’ consists of the 1st violin, the 2nd violin, viola and cello and it is characterized by strong beats and fast performance. When Moranbong Musical Group plays the light music, the electronic string quartet headed by Sunwoo Hanghee, the concert master (the 1st violin), plays the central role. While the musicians of existing light musical groups wore traditional Korean cloths (hanbok), long dress, one-piece or jacket, the musicians of Moranbong Electronic Musical Group wore sleeveless dresses or mini-skirts. Moranbong Musical Group tried resemble ‘Bond’ in terms of performance style and concept of appearance, as well as the color of music. ‘At a Breath,’ a light music piece Moranbong Musical Group played in ‘the Moranbong Musical Group Concert Celebrating Successful Launch of Artificial Satellite’ in 2012, is the piece that represents the Group. We can see that the introductory melody of this song is the same as that of ‘Viva,’ a song in Bond’s 2001 debut album, ‘Born.’ The score below shows the introductory melody of ‘Viva’ by Bond. Bond sampled the first movement of the Winter in the Four Seasons by Vivaldi in the introduction part, and we can see that Moranbong Musical

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<sup>47</sup> “Appointment of Comrade Kim Jungeun, the Supreme Leader of Our Party and the People, to the Highest Position of the Chosun Labor Party,” the Rodong Sinmun, April 12, 2012; “Appointment of Beloved Comrade Kim Jungeun to the Position of the 1st Chairman of DPRK National Defense Committee,” the Rodong Sinmun, April 14, 2012.

<sup>48</sup> “Beloved Comrade Kim Jungeun Watched the Demonstration Concert of Newly Formed Moranbong Musical Group,” the Rodong Sinmun, July 7, 2012.

<sup>49</sup>The above newspaper, January 1, 2013.

<sup>50</sup> When Moranbong Electronic Musical Group was first created, its name was ‘Moranbong Musical Group.’ However, the Group appeared under the name of ‘Moranbong Electronic Musical Group’ from the concert held to celebrate the visit of the 1st Secretary of Cuban National Council on November 4, 2018.

<sup>51</sup> “The Unique and Characteristic Performance Style of Moranbong Musical Group,” the Chosun Art, Vol. 7 (2015), p. 66.

Group used Bond's sampling in exactly the same way in its 'At a Breath.'<sup>52</sup>

<Picture 2> Melody of 'Viva' by Bond in Introduction Part



Source: Akbobada (<http://www.akbobada.com/pdf1.html>)

The Chosun Art, a North Korean magazine, explained the electronic string quartet as 'the characteristics of string quartet ensemble used by the classical music are developed to suit the aesthetic sense of the times and combined with the electronic musical instruments - that is the unique electronic music in our way.' The 1st and the 2nd violins, viola and cello of the string quartet have statuses and roles of their own, and each artists must take charge of his/her part to create an ensemble, and the string quartet was fielded according to the meanings given by the roles of the instruments in the process.<sup>53</sup> Unlike in other electronic musical groups, Moranbong Musical Group has the electronic string instruments as the base instruments, which can be deemed as an effort to present a hidden meaning to the composition of instruments. The electronic string instruments can create enormous sound effect of large formation orchestra with only a small formation, because their sound volume can be expanded to the maximum using electronic devices, such as the effector. This also represents the spirit of 'one that is worth a hundred' where a big effect is created with small resources.

Moranbong Electronic Musical Group has 'dance music' in its repertory, where the singers dance in formations as the South Korean girl groups do - this is what is different from Bocheonbo Electronic Musical Group that represented the Kim Jungil period. When compared such difference to the trends of South Korean popular music, it resembles the shift from solo singers to girl group singers - it can be deemed that North Korea adopted a portion of popular music trend in South Korea.<sup>54</sup> Also, this Group showed a dress concept similar to

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<sup>52</sup> Sampling means to use a specific part of an existing song as a sample to newly create a melody or to record the existing song in different way. Park Sunmin, *Popular Song Remake and Restoration* (Seoul: Communication Books, 2015), pp. 1-126.

<sup>53</sup> "Characteristics of String Quartet Ensemble," the Chosun Art, Vol. 2(2014), pp. 49-50.

<sup>54</sup> In South Korean popular music circle, the number of singing groups started to increase since the 1990s, and the portion of singing groups became gradually higher since the 2000s. Later on, the girl groups started to appear from the mid-2000s, and the girl group style idol singers became the mainstream. Lee Choongsang, "Analysis of South Korean Popular Music

that of the Girl's Generation. The concept dress of 'Tell Me Your Wish,' the title song of the 2nd mini album of the Girl's Generation released on June 29, 2009, was a uniform motivated by white military uniform, and Moranbong Musical Group also used white military uniform as its dress. Moranbong Electronic Musical Group also presented a choreography where the singers danced in a formation showing synchronized arm and leg movements, which reminded the South Korean girl groups. Until then, the choreographies of North Korean musical groups were no more than individual singers getting into the rhythm and showing simple gesture or hand signs or a group of singers making simple movements. However, Moranbong Electronic Musical Group was different - its singers presented unity through precise group dances and 5 or more singers presented various formations.

<Picture 3> A Scene from Moranbong Musical Group's Concert (2015)



The pictures above show the scenes from Moranbong Electronic Musical Group's 'dance music' performance. The singers presented mainly the synchronized hand and leg movements and change of formation. They presented the 'V' formation or synchronized hand movements to give sense of unity, and a leg movement where the dancers circled their right legs while standing with the left legs resembled that of the Girl's Generation. There are the ones with exceptional dancing skills in all girl groups, and Moranbong Musical Group and Cheongbong Musical Group also have the members in charge of dances when they play dance music.

Moranbong Electronic Musical Group showing a similar pattern with that of the South Korean girl groups can be a result of the global hanryu fever having an effect in North Korea also. Moranbong Electronic Musical Group can be deemed to have taken a similar form with that of the South Korean girl groups when considered that it consists of young female singers who show synchronized choreography. Moranbong Musical Group also has a member who can be regarded as the main vocal who has an excellent singing ability, usually takes the center position, is good at singing in high-pitched tones and applies techniques to her singing style. However, the members of Moranbong Musical Group sing in unison or sing different parts together instead of presenting differentiated characteristics of each member, while each member of South Korean girl groups takes distinctive positions.

Later on, Cheongbong Musical Group of Wangjaesan Art Group was established in July 2015 by the order of Kim Jungeun. Cheongbong Musical Group is a light musical group consists mainly of ensemble and brass instruments. Cheongbong Musical Group can be deemed as an important musical group that is one of the



mainstays of North Korean musical groups together with Moranbong Musical Group, because it was announced as ‘the light musical group in our way’ and ‘another family member musical group of the Party.’<sup>55</sup> Cheongbong Musical Group belongs to Wangjaesan Art Group, and the musicians of Wangjaesan Art Group and the core singers of Moranbong Chorus Group belong to Cheongbong Musical Group.<sup>56, 57</sup> ‘Cheongbong’ is a peak south of Baekdoosan Mountain and also refers to a former revolution battlefield where the ‘slogan trees’ were discovered.<sup>58</sup>

Cheongbong Musical Group is a light musical group and its instrumental music part consists of electronic musical instruments, string instruments, brass instruments and percussion instruments. The Group’s singers are females and they put emphasis on harmony and emphasize balance through the form of vocal ensemble. Also, the string quartet is in charge of instrumental music, as in case of Moranbong Musical Group. However, Cheongbong Musical Group attempted to present an elegant atmosphere by using the classical instruments instead of the electronic musical instruments. There are male musicians who play drum, brass instruments and string instruments - we can see that they tried to differentiate Cheongbong Musical Group from Moranbong Musical Group in terms of concepts related to music and composition.

The dresses of Cheongbong Musical Group are distinguished from the early days of its foundation, starting with the joint concert, <Forever with Our Party>, for celebration of the 7th Annual Convention of the Party held in 2016. Before, the female members were dressed in black or white evening dress and the male members were dressed in black tuxedo to present elegant and sophisticated image of a classic musical group. However, we could recognize that the Group was reorganized by seeing that the dresses and concept of Cheongbong Musical Group changed in the joint concert, <Forever with Our Party>, for celebration of the 7th Annual Convention of the Party held in 2016. Unlike in the early days of its foundation when the classic nature was emphasized and each singer wore different dresses according to their personality, all musicians and singers wore bluish green uniform from the joint concert for celebration of the 7th Annual Convention of the Party. The Group’s choreography also changed - while it was rather static before the reorganization (i.e. getting into the rhythm standing in their positions or simply making hand gestures), the members presented the group dances that emphasized unity and powerfulness and the girl group style choreography resembling that of Moranbong Musical Group.

The Rodong Sinmun explained that Cheongbong Musical Group was created to “burn the tens of million hearts with a high revolutionary fever and a fighting fever and announce the organization of new light musical group that will successfully carry out the role of scouts who will make a bonfire of stagnation and slump in the

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<sup>55</sup> “Another national treasure level art group that will represent and lead the art in our age, Cheongbong Musical Group, was organized by ideation and sponsorship of our esteemed leader, comrade Kim Jungeun,” the Rodong Sinmun, July 28, 2015.

<sup>56</sup> Wangjaesan Light Musical Group established in 1983 was reorganized into Wangjaesan Art Group in 2011 (estimated), and Wangjaesan Art Group focuses on dances.

<sup>57</sup> “Another national treasure level art group that will represent and lead the art in our age, Cheongbong Musical Group, was organized by ideation and sponsorship of our esteemed leader, comrade Kim Jungeun,” the Rodong Sinmun, July 28, 2015.

<sup>58</sup> Cheongbong is a former billeting place located in the Lee Myungsoo Worker’s Complex in Samjiyeon-gun, Yanggang-do, North Korea. It is a former revolution battlefield of North Korea where Kim Il-sung camped with his troops on May 18, 1939 when he was marching towards Moosan area. <<http://www.cybernk.net/>>

area of art after (the esteemed leader) gained a deep insight on the extraordinarily heightened cultural and emotional preference and demand of the people.”<sup>59</sup> Based on this statement, we can understand that there was a gap between the culture and art and the taste of the people at the time. The newspaper further explained that the role of the musical group was “to act as a trumpeter of carrying out the strategic intentions of the Party,” which allows us to assume that they tried to build an image for the new regime at its creation by creating a musical group that served the changed taste of the people.

## V. Conclusion

This paper studied how purposes of establishment, types and genres of musical groups were related by focusing on the time when they were established, to understand the changes of North Korean musical groups and cultural policies. As a result, we were able to find out that North Korea used musical groups considering types and genres according to various political purposes at the time of their creation.

<Table 1> Use of Musical Groups in North Korea

Use	Soviet Model		Transformation of Classical Music (Popular Appeal)		Global Trend
Form / Genre	Orchestra  Symphony	Chorus  Male military chorus	Big band, semi-orchestra  Jazz, light music (semi-classic)		Band music  Electronic music, popular element
Purpose	Nation- building	Overcoming crisis	Formalization of succession system	Building of civilized nation	Representative musical group of the leader
Motif	Soviet Union National Symphony Orchestra	The Red Star Chorus	Paul Mauriat Orchestra,  Glenn Miller Orchestra		Bond,  Girl's Generation, a girl group  Disco-type electronic musical group  mixed band,  solo female singer

First, the musical groups that borrowed the Soviet model appeared when North Korea was establishing its national identity early in its nation-building period and when it needed to strengthen internal unity. North Korea attempted to create a base for the nation and establish its national identity by creating a national symphony orchestra (the Central Symphony Orchestra at the time). North Korea tried to show that it had the authority of a cultural nation and had an independent musical system by creating the national symphony orchestra. The

<sup>59</sup> “Another national treasure level art group that will represent and lead the art in our age, Cheongbong Musical Group, was organized by ideation and sponsorship of our esteemed leader, comrade Kim Jungeun,” the Rodong Sinmun, July 28, 2015.

national symphony orchestra symbolized that North Korea had established its national foundation, and using the presence of the national symphony orchestra, North Korea actively encouraged the people to engage in nation-building during its early stage. Also, North Korea created the Exploits National Chorus to overcome the crisis called the March of Ordeal which came after the death of Kim Il-sung in 1994 and to strengthen the internal unity. Chorus can become a basis of unity for a community and present majesty and solemnness when formed by large number of singers. Also, the form of large-scale male military chorus delivers a unique feeling of intense pressure. Having believed in such effects of chorus, Kim Jungil attempted to achieve the military-first politics by fielding the Exploits National Chorus in the forefront during the March of Ordeal period to create an atmosphere to overcome the national crisis and give an impetus to solidarity and unity of the people. Kim Jungil recognized the effectiveness of musical format suitable for the difficult environment and political conditions at the time and used the chorus-type musical group. As it was intended when the Soviet Union established its national symphony orchestra, North Korea tried to establish its national identity by creating a symphony orchestra during the period of nation-building and attempted to muster the public in the period when a shift in critical situation was necessary by presenting a large-scale male military chorus resembling the Aleksandrov Ensemble.

Second, North Korea created new musical groups through transformation of classical music for formalization of succession system and building of a civilized socialist nation. Samjiyeon Musical Group and Eunhasu Orchestra experimented popular music by adding light musical elements to the format of classical orchestra and used the elements of change that represented the young leader. Hence, it can be deemed that these musical groups were created in the form of modernized, new musical groups that represent the successor in the course of its establishment. If North Korea immediately after liberation had tried to build the appearance of civilized country by creating Samjiyeon Orchestra, North Korea under Kim Jungeun regime tried to express its intention and message of achieving 'the civilized country' as it presented the new vision of 'the civilized socialist nation.' In the past, the classical music had been disregarded by the people in North Korea. Thus, North Korea tried to create music based on the preference of the people. By creating instrumental music based on the folk songs, it could attract attention of the people. As observed from such example, North Korea needed an element that could attract the people when it created the classic musical group that could symbolize the succession system and building of civilized nation. Hence, jazz and easy listening songs from foreign countries were used as main repertory and music from various genres were attempted in terms of format. The various formats of musical groups can be deemed as results of applying popular elements that considered the people's preferences to the musical groups based on classical music. Samjiyeon Orchestra was used to present the vision of civilized nation and to ease sanctions against North Korea by participating in the Pyeongchang Winter Olympics. Samjiyeon Orchestra's tour of South Korea in association with the Pyeongchang Winter Olympics had to be successful, because it was an international event that the whole world paid attention to and the first concert by a North Korean musical group in the international stage. It was a golden opportunity for the Kim Jungeun regime to make its debut and cast a message to the international society. While North Korea was known to be closed to the world, it showed that its society could accept universal music through Samjiyeon Orchestra and tried to refresh its image to the world. Also, North Korea tried to emphasize the image of Kim Jungeun as an open person.

Third, the musical groups that represented the leader, such as Wangjaesan Light Musical Group and

Bocheonbo Electronic Musical Group during the Kim Jungil regime and Moranbong Electronic Musical Group and Cheongbong Musical Group during the Kim Jungeun regime were created to establish the identity of the new regimes and secure the base of power for the new leaders, and those musical groups accepted the global trend of music. North Korea actively applied the new preferences of the people to popular musical groups, used the popular music groups as a means of presenting the newly emerged regime and attempted to establish the identity of the new regime and create a base of power for the leader through the popular musical groups. At this time, North Korea created two musical groups of similar formats in a similar period so that they would form a complementary system. Although these musical groups showed similar styles in terms of their performances, they were different in terms of concept and musical format. They formed a competitive composition while supplemented each other for mutual development at the same time.

The following features can be observed from such use of musical groups. First, North Korea created musical groups borrowing the Soviet model during the nation-building period and the crisis-overcoming period, because of the prevailing circumstances at the time. When the musical groups were created, North Korea was either a young country that lacked an adequate amount of infrastructure or in such a serious national crisis that could threaten the existence of the regime. At this time, North Korea focused on building the national identity by referring to and borrowing from the Soviet model to symbolize the nation and overcome the crisis, rather than creating an independent form. When presenting a new national vision for establishment of successor and civilized nation, North Korea applied the image of new era to the existing classical music and transformed the classical music with the elements of light music. Lastly, Kim Jungil and Kim Jungeun announced inauguration of the new leader by creating new musical groups that could represent them. When they did so, they intended to create popular musical groups by applying global musical trends.

This study attempted to identify the changes in North Korean musical groups and cultural policies by reviewing their relevance between purposes of their establishment and their forms and genres. There were various backgrounds and purposes with regard to creation of North Korean musical groups, and it is the limit of this study that such creation can be interpreted in many different directions. North Korean musical groups were ultimately created for political purposes of maintaining its regimes. However, they were influenced by international political landscape and domestic political situation and environment, and they were used in various appearances for different needs. Their creators did not just create them, but used their forms and genres - this study is meaningful in that it confirmed such fact. The fact that formats and genres of typical North Korean musical groups continued to change proves that North Korea is staying in harmony with the flow of time and applying the changing trends. Paying attention to such changes in North Korean musical groups is another way to monitor the changes in the North Korean society.

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