

NATIONAL
CHANGGEUK
COMPANY
OF
KOREA



Song of Red Cliff (2015)



Medea (2013)

NATIONAL CHANGGEUK COMPANY OF KOREA

The National Changgeuk Company of Korea was established in 1962 as a part of the National Theater of Korea, and it has been presenting traditional Korean opera, changgeuk for the past five decades. The Company has been recreating the five surviving stories of pansori (*Shimcheong-ga*, *Chunhyang-ga*, *Heungbo-ga*, *Sugung-ga*, and *Jeokbyeok-ga*) into changgeuk while cherishing the traditional Korean musical storytelling style and earning the national acclaim for its restoration and revival of the legacy of Korean literature.

CHANGGEUK

唱劇

Changgeuk is a traditional Korean opera that derives from pansori (traditional cantata) which is registered as a UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage.

“Chang” means pansori, and “geuk” means drama in Korean. While pansori is performed by a singer-storyteller completing the entire song with a drummer, changgeuk has a whole cast of pansori singers taking on the roles of different characters in the story and addressing each other in spoken and sung dialogue. Changgeuk was formed in the early 20th century when the western culture was presented to the Korean audience who were yearning for artistic innovations. With the construction of western-style theaters and the introduction of the director role, changgeuk we know today was finally born. Changgeuk is a genre still evolving, with its more than 100 years of history.



Trojan Women (2016)



Shimcheong-ga (2018)

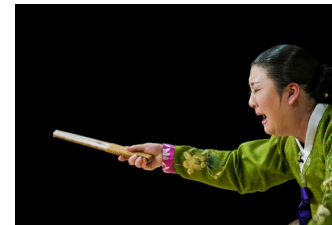
PANSORI

唱

Pansori is a traditional Korean genre of musical storytelling originally started as a form of folk entertainment for the people. It is characterized by the performance with expressive singing (*sori*), stylized narration (*aniri*) and mimetic gestures (*ballim*) lasting up to eight hours, and a male or female singer accompanied by a single barrel drum improvising texts that combine rural and erudite literary expressions. Pansori was designated as a Masterpiece of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity by UNESCO in 2003, gathering the recognition from the audience around the globe.

The term Pansori is derived from the Korean words pan, meaning “a place where many people gather” and sori, meaning “song”. As Pansori has been passed down with oral training, Pansori singers undergo a long and rigorous process to master the wide range of distinct vocal timbres and to memorize the complex repertoires.

Pansori can be traced back to the 17th century. It was embraced by elite and had its golden age in the 19th century. Currently, there are only five among the twelve pansori pieces remaining: *Shimcheong-ga*, *Chunhyang-ga*, *Heungbo-ga*, *Sugung-ga*, and *Jeokbyeok-ga*, and the other seven works were lost in the process of transmission. Although it was the Korean elite who lead Pansori to bloom in the 19th century, they caused the loss of some parts of the cultural legacy during the developments and changes. They deemed the seven works as vulgar, or morally inappropriate and prevented their transmission.



THIS IS KOREAN CLASSIC

RECREATION OF
FIVE COMPLETE
PANSORIES TO
CHANGGEUK

Pansori, a backbone of Changgeuk, was designated as a Masterpiece of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity by UNESCO in 2003. 5 pieces among the 12 pansori pieces are remaining in oral tradition:

Shimcheong-ga

Tale of a girl sacrificing herself to regain her father's eyesight

Heungbo-ga

Story of a greedy wicked brother and his kind-hearted younger brother, Heungbo

Chunhyang-ga

Love story between a *gisaeng's* daughter Chunhyang and a magistrate's son

Jeokbyeok-ga

Song of the Red Cliff, story from Romance of the Three Kingdoms

Sugung-ga

Story of a rabbit who was disguised by a turtle and went to the underwater palace



Mr.Heungbo (2017): adaptaion from *Heungbo-ga*



Shimcheong-ga (2018) : adaptation of *Shimcheong-ga*



Song of Red Cliff (2015): adaptation from *Jeokbyeok-ga*

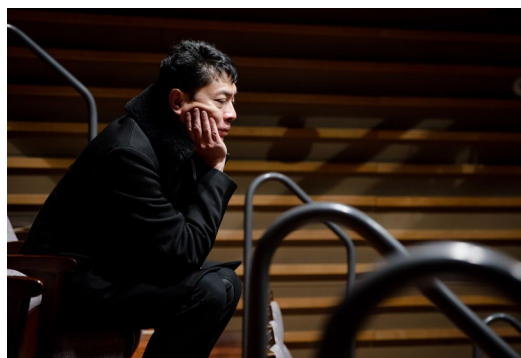
BE OUR INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATOR

COLLABORATION
WITH
INTERNATIONAL
ARTISTS

The National Changgeuk Company of Korea has been producing new works directed by the world-renowned directors, gathering great recognitions both in the performing arts field and the public at home and abroad.

Adaptation of all-time classic

Re-interpretation of tradition



Ong Keng Sen, Director of *Trojan Women* (2016)



Achim Freyer, Director of *Sugung-ga* (2012)



Andrei Serban, Director of *Different Chunhyang* (2013)

WHO'S NEXT?

EXPERIMENTAL
AND CHALLENGING
PRODUCTIONS

Seeking the way to bring new production adapting other contemporary arts to the stage, the National Changgeuk Company of Korea always welcomes new challenges to work with all kinds of genres while keeping its roots in pansori. Our new productions are now acknowledged as one of the most creative and dynamic artistic forms of the 21st century.

Restoration of lost pansori pieces

Collaboration with other genres



Madam Ong (2014) at the Théâtre de la Ville in Paris



SF Changgeuk *Sound in the Universe* (2018)

TROJAN WOMEN



CREDITS

Concept & Director • Ong Keng Sen
 Playwright • Bae Sam-sik
 Pansori composer • Ahn Sook-sun
 Music Director & Composer • Jung Jae-il
 Choreographer • Wen Hui
 Set Designer • Cho Myung-hee
 Lighting Designer • Scott Zielinski
 Video Designer • Austin Switser
 Costume Designer • MOOHONG
 Co-Production • National Theater of Korea & Singapore International Festival of Arts

TOURING INFORMATION

Performed in Korean with surtitles in English or in the local language
 Duration • 110 min
 Number of Casts • 26 (incl. musicians)
 Number of Staffs • approx. 18-20
 Stage Dimension • 8.4m (d) x 15.4m (w) x 8m (h)

PERFORMANCE DATES

11-20 Nov 2016 • Premiere National Theater of Korea / Daloreum Theater
 7-9 Sep 2017 • Singapore International Festival of Arts / Victoria Theater
 2-3 June 2018 • London International Festival of Theatre / Southbank Center
 8-10 June 2018 • Holland Festival / Muziekgebouw
 16-18 June 2018 • Wiener Festwochen / Theater an der Wien

Turned the human voice into a visceral experience
 - WhatsOnStage

An epic display of female emotion
 - Exeunt Magazine

Mesmerising, haunting, unforgettable
 - The Strait Times



Minimal Radicalism of Korean Traditional Opera

SYNOPSIS

Trojan Women is set in the kingdom of Troy. Troy was defeated by the Greek-Spartan allied forces. The performance deals with what happens to the Trojan women a few hours before they, including the queen, Hecuba, are taken as slaves to Greece, the victorious country.

Repertoire 1

The National Changgeuk Company of Korea has teamed up with a Singaporean director Ong Keng Sen and with best artists of Korea to present brand new changgeuk production *Trojan Women*, a tragedy written by the Greek playwright, Euripides.

'Trojan Women' is a tragedy centering on the horrors of war and its aftermath. But for the work, Ong Keng Sen is much focused on the repetitive cycle of death and birth. A Korean representative Pansori singer Ahn Sook-sun joined as a Pansori Composer and Jung Jae-il, well known artist from the K-pop and traditional Korean music scene also joined as Music Director and Composer. Ahn and Jung present pureness of Pansori and beauty of Korean music. And MOOHONG, a rising fashion designer also participated in costume design to show strong style within the minimalist design.

Euripides' tragedy meets traditional Korean pansori and K-pop in this moving spectacle about women in war. At this production, director Ong Keng sen returned to the minimalism of pansori where a storyteller sings with only one drummer. Each of the central characters like Hecuba, Cassandra, Andromache, Menelaus to be accompanied by primarily one traditional musical instrument, as in pansori. Only Helen is accompnied by a different color of musical instrument which is a piano. All the music composed by Jung Jae-il are speechlessly beautiful. His powerful music makes the human voice of pansori turn into a visceral experience of changgeuk.

Repertoire 1



MADAM ONG

Hilarious and
sexy, just
marvelous!
- Joongang Daily

Madam Ong opens
a new era of
Changgeuk
- Donga Daily

CREDITS		TOURING INFORMATION		PERFORMANCE DATES	
Playwright & Director	• Koh Sun-woong	Performed in Korean with subtitles in English or in the local language		11 Jun-6 Jul 2014	• Premiere National Theater of Korea / Daloreum Theater
Pansori & Music Composer	• Han Seung-seok	Duration	• 2 hr 30 min. (intermission)		
& Director	• Park Ho-bin	Number of Casts	• approx. 35 (incl. musicians)	14 - 17 Apr 2016	• Théâtre de la Ville-Paris / France
Choreography	• Kim Choong-shin	Number of Staff	• approx. 25		
Set Designer	• Lee Won-ho	Stage Dimension	• 14m (d) x 12m (w) x 6.7m (h)		
Video Designer	• Ryu Baek-hee				
Lighting Designer	• Lee Seung-moo				
Costume Designer					

The first R-rated Changgeuk from 'Lost Pansori Restoration Project'

Madam Ong is based on the pansori "Byeongangsoe-ga," which has been known as an "adult folktale". But the full version of this pansori didn't make it to today as it was neglected for its obscene language and sexual content. However, the sentiment within the plot meticulously describes the life of the people of the Joseon Dynasty (1392-1910) along with their pains and sorrows. It certainly brings the part of Korean history and culture to life on the stage.

Director Koh Sun-woong, who is famous for his brilliant works in the performing art scene decided to work on a traditional Korean opera for the first time in his career. In the process of reinterpreting the classic piece to the work that today's audience can relate, Koh kept the wits and touches of humor from the original story while recreating the characters along with their unique and lively dialogues. He won Cha Beom-seok Drama Award (Best Playwright in Musical) with *Madam Ong*.

SYNOPSIS

Ongnyeo is a kind woman with an attractive face and figure, whose only problem is her fate! She is destined to widowhood as all of her husbands die the year they get married. What is worse is that not only the husbands but other countless men who lust for or dishonor the widow also die. Finally, Ongnyeo is kicked out of the village.

Heading South, Ongnyeo meets Byeongangsoe as if it is fate, and they are a match made in heaven, so they begin to live together. But whenever Ongnyeo saves up money from chores, Byeongangsoe uses it up for gambling and drinking, so they are no longer able to live there. They have no choice but to move to Jiri Mountain. But Byeongangsoe only takes naps and does so-and-so in the mountains as well. Unable to

stand it any longer, Ongnyeo kept pestering him to at least get some firewood. So Byeongangsoe pulls off jangseung (Korean traditional totem pole) and uses it to make a fire. Outraged by this, the jangseungs hold a national meeting and resolve to give all diseases of the world to Byeongangsoe to have him suffer and die. Ongnyeo makes every effort to save her husband who was transformed into a totem pole.



SHIMCHEONG GA



CREDITS	TOURING INFORMATION	PERFORMANCE DATES
Playwright & Director • Sohn Jin-chaek	Performed in Korean with surtitles in English	25 Apr-6 May 2018 • Premiere
Pansori composer & Storyteller • Ahn Sook-sun	Duration • 2 hrs 30 min. (intermission)	Myeondong Theater
Music Director • Lee Tae-baek	Number of Casts • 36 (incl. musicians)	
Set Designer • Lee Tae-seop	Stage Dimension • 20m (w) x 16m (d) x 7m (h)	
Costume Designer • Tchai Kim		

Hipster
Performance,
This Is It
- Newsis



A real Changgeuk
offered to the
soul of a sorikkun
(pansori singer)
- JoongAng Sunday

Truly eye-opening, without any magic tricks

The tale of Shim cheong, which revolves around a girl who sacrifices herself to regain her father's eyesight, is a popular folktale in Korea. This well-known story is one of the five remaining pansori works which would take four to five hours to finish the whole performance.

Director Sohn Jin-chaek turned the five-hour pansori into two and a half hour long changgeuk with simple but bold and sophisticated setting without any modern twist to the plot or state-of-the-art technology. Instead, he leads the audience to focus on the voice and enjoy its refined style with a minimal backdrop along with elegant props of white folding fans and lotus flowers. Master pansori singer Ahn Sook-sun performs as dochang (storyteller) with her composition of this version of Shimcheong-ga. Her strong yet plaintive voice will captivate the audience while unfolding the tale and keeping the subtleties of the original pansori.

SYNOPSIS

Once upon a time, there lived a blind man named Shim Hak-gyu and his wife in Peach Blossom Village who wish to have a child. They finally had a daughter and called her Cheong. But Cheong's mother passed away soon after Cheong was born and Mr. Shim raised her by himself begging for milk from the neighbors. Cheong was a kind-hearted girl

who cares about her blind father very much even though she was just a child. As she became ten, she started supporting her father by begging. And one day, Mr. Shim wondered around the neighborhood waiting for his daughter and accidentally fell into a stream. A monk rescued him from drowning and told him that donating three hundred bags of rice to Buddha will cure his

sights. Learning that she could make his father to see the world again, Shim Cheong decides to sell herself to a merchant as the sacrifice for a peaceful sailing. She bid farewell to the world and then jumped into the sea, only hoping her father would regain sight by her sacrifice.



SONYEO GA

CREDITS
Playwright,
Director &
Composer • Lee Ja-ram
Art Director • Yeo Shin-dong

TOURING INFORMATION
Duration • 50 min.
Number of Casts • 4 (incl.
musicians)
Stage Dimension • 10m (w) x
8.5m (d) x
7m (h)

PERFORMANCE DATES
28 Feb-4 Mar • Premiere
Jayu Theater,
Seoul Arts
Center

The show with
strong impacts,
but make you smile
in the end
- Chosun Daily

The red cape
girl goes wild in
Changgeuk
- Seoul Daily



Daring girl goes into forest

Sonyeoga, which literally translates into “Song of a Girl,” is the inaugural production of a company’s ‘Different Angle on Changgeuk’ series. The project invites young artists to put a contemporary spin on changgeuk, a theatrical form derived from Korean traditional cantata “pansori.” *Sonyeoga* is a rendition of the European fairytale “Little Red Riding Hood.” Director Lee Ja-ram took inspiration from the 2010 “Le Petit Chaperon Rouge” by Jean-Jacques Fdida and created a tale of a curious and adventurous girl with a contemporary music style.

Lee Ja-ram is a renowned pansori singer. She entered the world of pansori in 1990 when she was 12. She holds the record of the youngest person to sing the entire *Chunhyang-ga* in eight straight hours when she was 20 and is listed in the Guinness World Records. However, she did not settle for the traditional art and explored new genres. She received the Best Performance by a New Actress distinction at the fifth Musical Awards and the Best Actress Award at the International Theater Festival Kontakt 2010 in Poland.

A company’s leading actress Lee So-yeon joined hands with Lee Ja-ram to play the girl who is true to herself and her desires. Instead of portraying the girl as an ingenue, Lee So-yeon’s interpretation of the girl represents passion, desire, and confidence.

SYNOPSIS

Once upon a time, a small girl was living in a small village. The girl becomes curious about the forest behind the village, but her mother only told the girl that she could go to the forest if she can take off her iron dress and iron shoes. Finally, the girl took off the iron clothes and embarked on a journey to grandma’s house across the wood in a red riding hood. But at her grandma’s house, the wolf in disguise awaited and started to take off the girl’s clothes one by one while luring her to bed. The girl realized that this is a trap and tried to find a clever way to deal with the wolf.