

NATIONAL THEATER OF KOREA presents  
NATIONAL CHANGGEUK COMPANY OF KOREA produces

# SONG OF THE RED CLIFF



# **Pansori as is, Story as new**

"Song of the Red Cliff" is based on "Jeokbyeokga," one of the five surviving pansori pieces compiled by Shin Jae-hyo (1812-1884). It retells the Chinese historical legend of the Battle of Red Cliffs from "Romance of the Three Kingdoms" from the 14th century. "Jeokbyeokga" is designated as the Important Intangible Cultural Property No. 5 in Korea.

In order to make a changgeuk raising the value of pansori, a company invited one of the best opera directors and Pansori master to a production. Lee So-young, a former artistic director of Korea National Opera Company made a stunning mise-en-scène. The set symbolizing the ribs of a fan is simple but effectively provides the visual spectacle on a rotating stage. It becomes a hill showered with arrows, a boat chasing Zhuge Liang and the battle field of the Red Cliff, complemented with ink-and-wash painting style projections.

Pansori Master and Korea's intangible human cultural asset, Song Soon-seop doubled as a pansori composer and narrator. He captivated the audience with his presence. The 78-year-old's coarse yet powerful voice, coming from a lifetime's experience, lends the changgeuk the strength to convey the story.

# Credits

**Director & Playwright** Lee So-young

**Pansori Composer & Narrator** Song Soon-seop

**Music Director** Kim Joo-hyun

**Composer** Hong Jung-ui

**Stage Designer** Kim Hyun-jung

**Production** National Changgeuk Company of Korea

**Artistic Director** Kim Sung-nyo

# Touring information

World premiere 15 Sep 2015, National Theater of Korea, Seoul

Performed in Korean with surtitles in English or in the local language

Duration: 2 hr 30mins (intermission)

Number of Casts : 64 (incl. musicians)

Number of Staffs : apprxy 80~100

Stage Dimension : 22m(w) x 21m(d) x 10m(h)

\* using a turntable(20meter in diameter)

Size of Venue : grand theater (capacity 1500)

\* This information in blue color serves only as a description of staging a production at the National Theater of Korea and may be altered any time depending on the venue at which the event is to be held. Certain modifications are possible.

*Song of the Red Cliff* is produced by National Changgeuk Company of Korea which is a resident company of National Theater of Korea.

# Director's Note

Pansori is a comprehensive art form enabled by one singer. Changgeuk, which expands the scope of pansori, is focused on sharing the emotional charge of pansori with the audience. I decided to direct this changgeuk with the responsibility to establish the standards and forms of changgeuk so that this genre can preserve what Shin Jae-hyo, theoretician of pansori in the late Joseon Dynasty, left us.

Under these circumstances, I came up with the following principles. First, the story of a changgeuk follows the lyrics of pansori. Second, the musicians play the role of drummers in the past. The Chinese historical legend of *Song of the Red Cliff* was born again as a Korean pansori by adding the story of the grass roots struggling with historical ups and downs. It was perplexing to make a concept out of this legend because the elements of an exaggerated heroic tale still exist in it. However, the main character risking his life to save a child's life finally made me breathe easy.

Open up your fan and humor the land  
Spill your ink to make a river

Wake up your drum to put it in the sky  
Stand up, those lying down

Now, I will melt into tears!

# Synopsis

## **ACT 1**

### **OATH OF THE PEACH GARDEN AND THREE VISITS TO THE THATCHED COTTAGE**

Liu Bei, Guan Yu and Zhang Fei become blood brothers to restore order to the country in turmoil. Moved by Liu Bei's sincere invitation, Kong Ming joins them.

## **ACT 2**

### **BATTLE OF CHANGBAN**

Defeated by Cao Cao, Liu Bei's army leaves the devastated village and elderly people and women follow them. Zi Long finds Liu Bei's wife and son lost during the war, but Liu Bei refuses to take him, saying that Zi Long's life is much more precious than his son's. At the battle of Changban, Zhang Fei's exploit saves many lives. Meanwhile, Kong Ming leaves for Zhou Yu's camp, saying that they need an alliance with him to defeat Cao Cao.

## **ACT 3**

### **SORROW OF SOLDIERS**

During a break in the battlefield, Cao Cao's soldiers feel sad about their misfortune and become nostalgic.

# Synopsis

## **ACT 4**

### **ZI LONG'S BULLET BOW**

Kong Ming and Zhou Yu agree that they need to attack with fire to defeat Cao Cao. Shocked by Kong Ming's extraordinariness shaking heaven and earth. Zhou Yu orders his soldiers to kill him in order to prevent future troubles. But Kong Ming manages to leave Zhou Yu's camp with Zi Long.

## **ACT 5**

### **CAO CAO'S DREAM**

Kong Ming and Zhou Yu agree that they need to attack with fire to defeat Cao Cao. Shocked by Kong Ming's extraordinariness shaking heaven and earth. Zhou Yu orders his soldiers to kill him in order to prevent future troubles. But Kong Ming manages to leave Zhou Yu's camp with Zi Long.

## **ACT 6**

### **ZI LONG'S BULLET BOW**

Kong Ming and Zhou Yu agree that they need to attack with fire to defeat Cao Cao. Shocked by Kong Ming's extraordinariness shaking heaven and earth. Zhou Yu orders his soldiers to kill him in order to prevent future troubles. But Kong Ming manages to leave Zhou Yu's camp with Zi Long.







# National Changgeuk Company of Korea

The changgeuk is a form of traditional Korean opera over 100 years of history. It is developed out of pansori, a Korean traditional performance, where a singer recites a story using traditional Korean singing and performing techniques to the sound of buk, Korean drum. Changgeuk incorporates this pansori with theatrical aspects.

Established in 1962, the National Changgeuk Company of Korea (Artistic Director: Kim Sung-nyo), has presented changgeuk based on the five surviving stories of pansori in Korean traditional style.

With a current vision of diversifying repertoires and audience of changgeuk, the Company has recently presented various style of changgeuk by adopting contemporary themes, based on diverse genres of all over the world. For this, the Company cooperates with talented directors and playwrights of Korea and even world-renowned creators. Along with sensational experiments, the Company has also carried out 'Lost Pansori Restoration' project and has hold Complete Performance of Pansori for the last 30 years to preserve the tradition of Pansori.