celestial harmonies

sea & mountain:
music in the korean style
michael atherton
celestial harmonies 13170-2
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world music (korea)

the artists
Multi-instrumentalist Michael Atherton composed and produced this recording.

Born in the U.K. in 1950, he grew up in Australia. He is an internation-
ally travelled performer, composer, author of books on musical instru-
ments, and an accomplished composer in a variety of genres and styles in-
cluding chamber music, screen, radio and theatre.

He is founding Professor of Music and Head of Contemporary Arts at the
University of Western Sydney, Australia.

Michael Atherton performs on no less than 24 different instruments on
this recording, Korean and Western alike. He is assisted by Mina Kanaridis,
vocals, and Philip South, percussion, both of which can be heard on a num-
ber of other Celestial Harmonies re-
leases by Michael Atherton, Michael
Askill and Synergy.

For Celestial Harmonies/Black Sun
Music, Michael Atherton has also
recorded ANKH: THE SOUND OF
ANCIENT EGYPT (13174-2),
ABUNDANCE (13192-2),
SHOALHAVEN RISE (15019-2),
LYREBIRD (15023-2) and CROSS-
HATCH (15028-2).

the project (thoughts from the artist)
As an Australian living in a unique multicultural society, I am
privileged to count Korean-Australians among my friends and to
have travelled to Korea on several occasions as a performer. I enjoy
Korea, its music and the liveliness of the Korean people, and
welcome the day when the country might become united again.

In creating this musical project, it was inevitable that I would
want to express something of my passion for Korea's rich musical
heritage, not simply through copying or emulation, but to allow
for melodies, rhythms and timbres to permeate my own musical
background, through an osmotic process. The result is a mostly
improvised and spontaneously created collection of pieces.

I acknowledge respectfully, Korean cultural identity and values,
and the many wonderful composer-musicians I have been
privileged to listen to and meet on my travels. Included are Hwang
Byung-ki (kayagum/zither), Kim Duk-Soo (samul nori/percussion),
Won Jang-Hyun (taegum/flute), and An Sook-Su (panseur). Each is
a master, an intangible asset to Korea's rich cultural life. Yet mostly
unknown to Western audiences in stark contrast with a growing
number of Korean virtuosos working in the canons of European
classical music.

The instrumental palette on this CD is broad. Some of the
instruments are Korean and some of the combinations reflect
Korean practices. For example, track 4 The Singer of Tales is
influenced by pansori—an extended musical narrative performed
by a singer accompanied by a small double-headed barrel drum
(puk). Lovesong 1 and Lovesong 2 are based on minyo, traditional
folk-songs heard in the cities of Seoul and Kyongju.

The free improvisations on the zither and the guitar heard on A
Poet's Longing and A Monk Reflects allude to the sanjo tradition.
Sanjo might be described as 'scattered melodies'. It is a solo form
devoted to virtuosic performances on a melodic instrument
accompanied by the changgo, an hour-glass drum.