

Vong Pak

Korea: drummer, actor, teacher, founder of VP Korean Drum

Object: bronze bells

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하곤 했다. 난 뉴욕 언더그라운드 아트 씬□
어떻게 돌□□□□ 알고 싶었□. □□ □□
경험□ 없□□□□ 오늘의 내□ 존재 할 수
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(Korean)

[I used to perform with break dancers because I needed to know what was going on in this world. Without the busking, Vong Pak would not exist.]

When I was in Korea, I worked in a traditional Korean music orchestra and in Ansung Nam sadang, a travelling theater troupe from Kyounggi Province. I was interested in creative things, and the subject of theater came to me. I came to study theater at Brooklyn College in 1998. I thought that I would never have a chance to play Korean drums. But my first career in New York was to be a busker with Music Under New York performing Seoljanggu, which is drumming combined with dance in the sangmo hat with its spinning ribbon. I also performed with break dancers because I needed to know what was going on in this world.

Korean drumming comes from daily life in agricultural society. Farmers played the drums, like with African drumming, but in Korea, who is a farmer? Only three percent are in farming. I realized that the spirit is where I am in the city. So that is how I tried to do it. Koreans have a term called ChoBal Shim. It means when you start something, you need a pure mind. I had a hard time as an immigrant and student and with no English. But I kept the spirit of ChoBal Shim



as a musician and drummer. In the street or in a lesson or a beautiful theater, it does not matter. In the “Blue and White” projects I brought the traditional Korean I-Ching philosophy together with the violin, modern dance, guitar or cello, or whatever. The main thing is to make a storyline. I bought these bells nearly two decades ago from a factory in Kyounggi Province, where I lived. The factory is well known for the high quality bronze, such as kitchenware as well as bronze instruments, including the kkwaenggwari folk gong.

Bio:

Vongku Pak is a Korean-born and New York City-based performing artist and founder of VP Korean Drum and Dance Troupe. He has been solidly trained in different regional traditional Korean drumming, including pungmul, samulnori, and traditional dance. He was a Finalist for the 2012 NYFA Fellowship in the category of Folk/ Traditional Arts. He has performed at numerous venues and festivals in the New York area as well as more than 20 countries. His music is not limited to folk arts but expands to the field of contemporary world music. Mr. Pak has served as a teaching artist of Korean drumming and dance at East and West International Studies, Hunter College High School, and Bayside High school among others. He holds a BA in Theater from Brooklyn College. For more information, visit <http://www.koreandrum.org>