



The Lindenbaum Festival Orchestra members perform under the baton of Toshiyuki Shimada, conductor of Eastern Connecticut Symphony Orchestra at an auditorium in the Jeju 4.3 Peace Park, Aug. 7, the second day of the 2019 Lindenbaum Peace Workshop and Concert held in Jeju. Courtesy of Lindenbaum Organization

Peace workshop, concert connect experts, youth on Jeju Island

By Jung Da-min

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JEJU Island — When people talk about Jeju, many focus on its well-preserved nature and its calm atmosphere. One thing that is often left out is the island's tragic history — the April 3 Massacre (sometimes abbreviated as 4.3) that started in 1948 — said an American conductor who visited the southern island recently.

"To get to know about the tragedy in Jeju was very shocking to me as an American citizen," said Toshiyuki Shimada, music director and conductor of Eastern Connecticut Symphony Orchestra. He visited the island for the first time to participate in the 2019 Lindenbaum Peace Workshop and Concert and conduct the Lindenbaum Festival Orchestra. "This made my visit here more meaningful," Shimada said.

Organized by the Lindenbaum Organization (Executive Director Lee Seung-hee), the workshop and concert on Jeju from Aug. 6 to 7 invited prominent professors and musicians from around the world for a discussion on how to contribute to the peace efforts on the Korean Peninsula, under the theme of "Sustainable Cultural Bridge for Peace in Korea." Young students from South Korea and the U.S., including members of the Lindenbaum Festival Orchestra, participated in the two-day event.

Jeju was one of the symbolic places where Won Hyung-joon, the founder and music director and a violinist of the Lindenbaum Festival Orchestra, had been dreaming of holding a joint concert with North Korean musicians someday. Presented on this symbolic island of peace and sad history, the Lindenbaum workshop and concert gave a special opportunity for the audience and young participants, including members of the Lindenbaum Festival Orchestra, to listen to inspiring stories from the expert panel as they shared their stories of communicating with people with various backgrounds through their talents.

The panel included creative composer Tod Machover, academic head of the MIT Media & Arts Science Program; maestro Shimada; Asian University for Women Support Foundation Board of Directors Chairman Kim Young-joon; surgeon

Kee B. Park, a faculty member at the Harvard Medical School's Program in Global Surgery and Social Change (PGSSC) and also the director of DPRK Programs for the Korean American Medical Association.

Musicians from Tianjin Julliard School also participated on the panel, including Robert Ross, the associate dean of the school's Pre-College and Educational Development; Xiangyu Zhou, a resident professor of Clarinet for Graduate Studies and Pre-College; and Julia Glenn, a resident professor of Music Theory for Graduate Studies and Violin for Pre-College.

For Machover, in particular, visiting Jeju gave him another opportunity to get to know more about Korea as he has been working on writing the "Symphony for the Koreans," at the request of director Won who visited Machover's MIT Media Lab office in 2017.

"Peace is a difficult word. Because it's like an extreme state and it's used so often, people think it's like god, love or music. I think that more practical idea is, I believe in listening," Machover said. Since 2013, he has been creating what are called "city symphonies" in collaboration with citizens of the cities ranging from artists and amateurs to make various sounds from urban environments into music that are performed in an orchestra pit.

Machover said his interest has always been in bringing different cultures together since he was little, born to an engineer father who does computer graphics and a pianist mother and later becoming a composer of robotic operas.

He said the political situation is



Conductor Toshiyuki Shimada

Courtesy of Lindenbaum Organization



High school students Michelle Park, left, and Shin Jae-hoon

Courtesy of Lindenbaum Organization

terrible everywhere in the world where so many places are divided by ideologies and values, while politicians take advantage of conflict and separation, but he said there is still a possibility.

"But I think the possibility for people to communicate is pretty bearable," he said. "It's such an important moment in a serious way we must find a better level to talk about."

He is planning to complete the Symphony for the Koreans project by next year, about one year on from now.

Having visited many places in South Korea including Bukchon Hanok Village and Dongdaemun



Composer Tod Machover

Korea Times photo by Jung Da-min



Surgeon Kee B. Park

Korea Times photo by Jung Da-min

shared his opinion on the recent developments in inter-Korean relations.

"Unfortunately, North Korea looks at the inter-Korean relationship in a different way. They have different expectations, because they think of us as minjok — one ethnic group. South Korea is not living up to their expectations," Park said, pointing out that it would be hard for South Korea to proceed with civilian exchanges too, if the North does not feel its regime is secured.

This is because the North Korean side links civilian activities together with security and political issues, at least when it comes to the relationship with the South, he said.

"If they (the South Korean government) really want to improve their relations with North Korea, it has to be, you can't do both pressure and engagement. At this point, I think the pressure has to be put aside at least for now, and give peace a chance and be consistent. You can't be hitting with one stick and on the other hand, say, here's the food."

Park reiterated that there should be some sanctions relief for the improvement of inter-Korean relations.

"It was very inspiring that there are lot of people who share their passion and came up with the organizations to actually talk about something and to raise awareness," Michelle Park, a high school student from Connecticut, said at the first day of the workshop held at Jeju National University.

On the following day at the concert in Jeju 4.3 Peace Park, Michelle Park also presented her video art project that shows combinations of colors representing peace and

non-violence.

"In the U.S. or everywhere around the world, there's a lot of diverse people with different opinions and sometimes some are controversial, but it's important to remind us that we grew up with a same group of love and it is important that we don't fight over with each other, just to have short-term gains," she said.

Another high school student participant Shin Jae-hoon, who is also a clarinetist member of the Lindenbaum Festival Orchestra, said seeing director Won was inspiring and made him want to contribute to peace on the Korean Peninsula. "I personally think this orchestra isn't very focused on political issues but rather it is meant for peace. Obviously music has only one language. It should be played at the same notes, and in different countries they will understand what these are," Shin said. "I'm just a normal teenager so there's not much I can do about it but I still want to contribute to my country... and I thought it'd be great to make great use of my personal interests, and then help my country, help both Koreas to gain peace."

Shin said the power of the Lindenbaum Festival Orchestra especially comes from young members who can perform for the pure purpose of delivering a message of peace, as they are not ideologically divided.

On the following day at the peace concert in 4.3 Peace Park, the Lindenbaum Festival Orchestra performed under the baton of Shimada with violinist Glenn and clarinetist Zhou joining the performance. Gay-ageum performances also added to the performance for a medley of the traditional Korean song "Arirang" arranged by Gang In-kyu and also a commemorative song for the April 3 Massacre titled "Be Light" sung by soprano Kang Hye-myung.

Machover also presented his "Flora" (1990) and "Gammified" (2019), presenting unique experiences for the audience to listen to a piece that combines numerous sonic layers coming from electronics and the voice of Karol Bennett, and another that starts with solo Gamma spectrum and becomes more and more freely vibrating, independent musical strains, performed together with a violin, a clarinet and two cellos.

A student band on Jeju named Gold Pasta also performed during the intermission.



Michelle Park's video project on display at an auditorium at the Jeju 4.3 Peace Park, Aug. 7 the second day of the 2019 Lindenbaum Peace Workshop and Concert.

Korea Times photo by Jung Da-min