



For Immediate Release

MODERN ECHOES OF THE ANCIENT
MYUNG SOO KIM DANCE PROJECT PRESENTS SEVEN
KOREAN RITUAL SOLOS, JUNE 14–18, AT
THE DUKE ON 42ND STREET

Myung Soo Kim has a secret.

A 21st century medium, Kim channels ancient rituals of Korean shamanism, fusing them with contemporary dance to create a world of pastpresent. This mysterious marriage reveals itself when “Arirang: Korean Ritual Solos” takes over The Duke on 42nd Street, June 14–18.

Against a 12-foot traditional painting of proliferating Buddhas, Kim metamorphosizes through a series of seven ritual dances. Between each solo she radically inserts Korean “arirang” (peasant songs of resistance), as well as on-stage costume changes that provocatively play on an adage of Korean performance: “Once the dress fits, the dance will come.”

In the inaugural, gong-accompanied “Nabich’um” (“Butterfly Dance”), Kim moves serenely in a gown of white and primary colors, a large flower budding from each hand and her face shaded by a golden, peaked paper crown. Then, donning a red hat adorned with cock feathers, Kim transitions into “Pujongnori” (“Purification Dance”) a shamanic cleansing ritual. She embodies a shaman again in the eerie “Tosalp’uri” (“Exorcising Dance”), swathing herself in voluminous white fabric and warding away evil spirits with a white scarf twice her height.

After shooting invisible arrows in four directions, Kim treads the ground ceremoniously in “Kommu” (“Sword Dance”), wearing a majestic military uniform. The rhythmic dance features the performer wielding a sword in each hand,

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exorcising spirits through the artful ritual of combat. In immediate contrast is the solemnity of “Sungmu” (“Buddhist Monk Dance”), a solo symbolizing a monk’s encounter with worldly temptations. As Kim alternates between tense stillness and voluptuous movement, her long white sleeves caress the air in sinuous patterns. An upright *pobko* drum is a watchful on-stage presence, voiced at times by Kim’s live percussions.

In “Taep’yongmu” (“Peace Dance”), Kim dons a lavish, rainbow-striped royal costume to celebrate the kingdom’s prosperity with a series of delicate hand and foot gestures. The program closes with “Salp’urich’um” (“Release Dance”), a well-known traditional dance that is performed in a bright white garment. Two flowing scarves dramatize the lyrical undulations of the dancing body.

Myung Soo Kim was born in Seoul, South Korea in 1954 and started her ballet training in 1967. She won the Grand Prix at the 1972 Korean National School Ballet Competition and founded Myung Soo Kim Dance Project in Seoul in 1980. In 1983, she performed at the first International Modern Dance Festival in Tokyo before traveling to the U.S. to study at the Martha Graham School of Contemporary Dance. In 1988, she co-founded the Korean People’s Artists Federation in Seoul, South Korea. Between 1990 and 1998, Kim became a political refugee living in Germany and the U.S. because her visits to North Korea violated South Korea’s National Security Law. In 2001, she acquired permanent resident status as an artist in the U.S. and is currently based in New York.

Kim has performed in New York at City Center, Dance Theater Workshop, St. Mark’s Church, La MaMa e.t.c., Asia Society and Columbia University’s Miller Theatre. Elsewhere in the U.S., she has appeared at Jacob’s Pillow Dance Festival and Harvard University’s Lowell Hall. Kim co-authored a book on Korean Shamanic ritual dance, published in Korea, and has taught traditional Korean dance across North and South Korea, at Harvard University and, currently, at New York’s Bridge for Dance School. Since 2005, she has been a mentor for Dance

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Advance of Philadelphia and presently serves as an International Advisor and Special Consultant to the Jerome Robbins Dance Division, New York Public Library for the Performing Arts at Lincoln Center.

The evening curtain for Myung Soo Kim Dance Project at The Duke on 42nd Street, Wednesday through Saturday, is at 8pm. There will also be 2pm matinees on Saturday and Sunday and a 7pm performance on Sunday. Tickets are \$35 and \$25 for students and seniors, and can be purchased at The Duke on 42nd Street Box Office or by calling Telecharge at 212-239-6200 (also online at www.telecharge.com). The Duke on 42nd Street is located at 229 West 42nd Street, 2nd Floor, between 7th and 8th Avenues.

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