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## Presenter Interview プレゼンター・インタビュー

Serving as the “control tower” for the international outflow of Korean culture,  
Korea Arts Management Service (KAMS)

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### Profile

Ms. Woo Yeon

Born 1971. After entering the Korean Literature Dept. of Sookmyung Women's University, Ms. Woo encountered the performing arts through the theater club and writing plays. After graduation she became involved in private-sector company management for ChangMu dance company, ModI Theatre company and so on before starting a production company for festival planning for AS-SITEJI International Festival, the ChangMu International Arts Festival and other international festivals. Until 2005 she was director of the planning dept. of the SIDance program of the CID-UNESCO Korea Chapter, where she was involved in the planning and programming numerous international dance festivals such as the “2005 Korea-Japan Butoh Festival & Contemporary Dance Festival,” the “Digital Dance Festival” and the “British Council Forward Motion Korea Exhibition.” In 2006, working as a producer at the public Seoul Performing Arts Company she learned about management of public arts companies while planning productions of musicals and total theater and promoting overseas performance tours. Since 2007, Ms. Woo has headed the International Exchange Dept. of the Korean Arts Management Service (KAMS), a branch organization of South Korea's Ministry of Culture Sports and Tourism. There she is active as representative in charge of programs for expanding the activities of Korean artists into overseas markets through the Performing Arts Market in Seoul (PAMS) and other programs and strategic international exchange programs.

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[http://gokams.or.kr/kams\\_eng/MA/main.asp](http://gokams.or.kr/kams_eng/MA/main.asp)



Established in January 2006, the Korea Arts Management Service (KAMS) is now in its fifth year since being established as a branch organization of South Korea's Ministry of Culture Sports and Tourism for support of arts management. With national policy now focusing on the development and nurturing of arts/culture contents and overseas expansion of activities by Korean artist groups, KAMS is playing an increasingly important role in these efforts. KAMS's International Exchange Dept. serves as a “control tower” for this international expansion of Korean performing arts. We spoke with this department's director, Ms. Woo Yeon, about the results of these past five years and the outlook for the future.

(Interview: Noriko Kimura)

We had the opportunity to talk with the previous KAMS' director, Mr. Lee Gyu-Seog, shortly after the Center began operations. At that time we got the impression that international exchange and overseas expansion of activities for Korean artists through PAMS (Performing Arts Market in Seoul) was the Center's main function. In the five year since, it appears that the Center's organization and scope of activities has grown considerably to the point where you are now major organization in this field of engagement overseas.

I began working in KAMS' International Exchange Dept. from 2007, but since 2005, working through PAMS to increase recognition of our Center among overseas professionals in the performing arts world and promoting Korean performing arts, both inbound and outbound, was a major aim of the International Exchange Dept. After that, in addition to PAMS, we launched two projects in 2006, a research project for the management of Gwangju Han City of Asian Culture and a project to support participation at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival. Then, in 2007 we launched a program for supporting overseas expansion by Korean artists. In 2008 we began developing overseas bases for our activities and worked to encourage expansion into foreign markets for Korean traditional performance arts, and commemorating the Beijing Olympics, we launched a Korea-China Cultural Exchange program. In 2009 we established a Support for Korean Traditional Performing Arts' Overseas Expansion program and began a new program to develop an international exchange information database. In these ways,

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we have been expanding our activities with broad-ranging perspectives.

Looking at KAMS as a whole, compared to the full-time staff of eight that we began with, we now have 40 fulltime staff and our budget from the national government has tripled. So, you can see that both the volume and scope of our activities has expanded greatly in just five years.

I would like to go on to ask you some basic facts about your organization. What is the official role of KAMS and what is its positioning within the nation's government agencies?

I believe that KAMS is an organization that always stands as a bridge between government and the creators, between the creators and the distribution network and market and between the distribution network and market and the audience. By providing organic connections between the various dimensions of the performing arts world, we are trying to activate the management of the various arts organizations and increase their capacity for sustainable growth. In order to do this, we are pursuing programs and support activities in the four main areas of International Exchange, Human Resources, Evaluation and R&D, and Education & Consulting.

Organizationally, we are a branch organization of the Ministry of Culture Sports and Tourism. Since 2000, fostering the development of arts and culture contents and their expansion into foreign markets has been an important pillar of South Korea's culture policy, which gives KAMS an important role and places high expectations on us.

It is clear that the scope of KAMS' activities is broad. What is the organizational structure of KAMS and what are the roles of the various departments?

Structurally, KAMS has a Board of Directors, under which is the President (permanent director) and three departments. One is the Planning & Administration Dept., which is in charge of the administrative aspects, including human resources, education and accounting. Another department is the R&D, Consulting Dept. Its main functions are running an evaluation center for arts organizations and arts companies, providing consulting services in the field of arts organization management, including practical areas such as taxes and accounting, human resources development in the areas of production and management (Culture & Arts Planning/Management Academy), researching and archiving information in the areas of arts markets and management and making that information available (publishing an Arts Management journal “weekly@Arts Management”), researching actual performing and visual arts and operating a database, evaluating nationally funded performing and visual arts programs and operating and evaluating the Korean Cultural Society.

Particularly important is the fact that South Korea still has a lack of professionals in the arts management field and developing human resources in this field is a pressing issue. To answer this need, we provide an educational program involving the training of about 100 people interested

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At the 2008 APAP (Association of Performing Arts Presenters) conference (USA) KAMS booths at international arts markets and music markets provide comprehensive introductions to Korean performing arts.



At the Asia-Pacific Network Meeting at the 2008/Spain WOMEX (World Music Expo) At the WOMEX expo in Spain, representatives from South Korea's KAMS, the New Zealand Arts Council and the Australia Arts Council launched a “Asia-Pacific World Music Network Meeting” to discuss activities for introducing Asian music in the world music markets.

in becoming arts management professionals, including arts management majors, people with over one year’s experience in the field or interns, and we place them at public and private sector theaters, festival organizers, production companies and performing arts companies with a stipend to pay their salaries for three years. The stipend actually pays the employer 80 percent of the trainee’s salary for the first year, 60 percent for the second year and 40 percent for the third year. This tiered system assists the organizations and companies in hiring the production professionals they need gradually over this period. From the trainee’s standpoint, this system allows them to learn on the job about the basics of the performing arts and the demands of the profession. At the same time we provide them with the online and offline interactive information exchange and consulting through the arts management organization CoP (Community of Practice) that we support. At appropriate times we also hold workshops to boost skill levels.

We have also opened our Arts Management Academy. The Academy offers three programs, an annual curriculum aimed at strengthening the knowledge and skills necessary for success in production and management (27 lectures in the four areas of skills, leadership, self-management, and arts knowledge), a Regional Academy Onsite program for HR development in different areas of the country and an educational program aimed at strengthening skills at arts organizations and companies (marketing, finance and personnel management, leadership, systems operation).

Let me explain a bit about the program for arts organizations and companies. Since 2000, South Korea has had a “Specialized Arts Organization and Company Certification System” that was established under the Culture & Arts Promotion Act for the purpose of supporting and nurturing arts organizations and companies. This system enables the national or regional governments to certify organizations commissioned to run national and public arts companies and theaters or private sector arts companies as “specialized arts organizations or companies” and provide support for them through favorable tax classification as well as system benefits and professional management consulting services. As of 2009, some 320 organizations and companies have been certified under this system. Expanding the number of these certified arts organizations and helping to activate them is another job of KAMS. Toward this purpose, we are engaged in research and development projects in the field of arts management that include website operation, surveys and analysis, publishing reports and formulating mid- and long-term legislation proposals, holding workshops for civil servants and creating databases.

The third department in KAMS is the International Exchange Dept. that I work in. Presently we have a staff of 12 in this department engaged in international exchange and helping Korean performing artists enter overseas markets. Our activities include organizing and running PAMS (Performing Arts Market in Seoul) on the inbound side, while on the outbound side we are supporting the overseas activities of Korean artists, building regional networks, developing markets and operating a information website (The Apro).

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Dulsori participating in a showcase at the Global Festa in the USA/2009

This Korean percussion group has recently drawn particular acclaim among the Korean performing arts companies touring internationally. This performance was covered by *The New York Times*.

There are platforms for international exchange. It can be the exchange of actual contents through performances. It can be exchange through publicity, advertising and marketing, and it can be intellectual exchange of information and knowledge. Our major aim is to create systems for sustainable international exchange and support of overseas activities by Korean artists by making full use of these three platforms in developing overseas networks and creating organic relationships for the exchange of actual culture and arts as well as information, creating a reciprocating structure for the export of performing art works and strengthening the global potential of arts companies.

The 2009 Performing Arts Market in Seoul (PAMS) was certainly a big success. There were many more overseas participants than in previous years and clearly seems to have emerged as one of Asia's leading arts markets.

We have been told that after five years our efforts finally brought results. In the years before, we had not gotten very good reviews. I believe that our active participation in overseas arts markets and the networking we did there finally paid off in substantial results.

We have three aims in organizing PAMS. One is to help Korean artists expand their activities overseas. Through our PAMS Choice showcase we select 15 or 16 works in theater, dance, music and multimedia to present each year. For these PAMS Choice works from 2006 through 2009 we have succeeded in arranging a total of 106 overseas performances for 28 works. For 2010 alone, negotiations are now in progress for 85 performances by 31 companies. When works selected for our PAMS Choice showcase have overseas performances, we automatically provide them with airfare for one performance trip (or tour) a year for a three-year period. I believe this to be a big help for groups who are expanding their activities overseas.

The second aim is to promote South Korea and Korean arts worldwide by raising the profile and quality of PAMS as one of Asia's leading arts markets.

The third aim is strengthen our networks in the various regions of the world as a means to build platforms for overseas expansion of Korean arts. Presently PAMS is a member of 12 organizations in four regions of the world where we have conducted promotions by participating in their conferences, arts markets and festivals. At the same time we have actively invited the producers and directors who are the important figures of these organizations to PAMS. In PAMS 2009 we had 146 such participants from 44 countries, which represents twice the number of countries and 1.6 time the number of overseas participants we had in 2005.

What other international exchange programs do you have besides PAMS?

We are currently developing programs in cooperation with overseas organizations. In 2009 we had five companies performing in Brazil in a “Korean Dance Feature.” We also had workshops as part of that program and it appears that we will be seeing collaborative works coming from the

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dancers that participated in the workshops. There has also been exchange in the magazine media involving dance critics from the two countries who took part in the symposium that was held as part of the program. This is the kind of multifaceted approaches that exchanges should involve.

Also, from 2010 we have launched the information website The Apro with the aim of strengthening international business. In addition to providing information about trends in countries around the world, the Korean side of the site offers information relevant to expanding activities overseas, while the English side gives information about the performing arts market in South Korea. In the future I hope to see The Apro become a platform for increased online exchange.

**You have a wide range of activities overseas. Do you have overseas offices?**

No, we don't have any overseas offices. Instead, we have worked strategically from early on to develop platforms for our artists to take their works overseas. This has involved drawing up accords with four organizations and festivals in North America (Asian Society, Japan Society, the Under the Radar Festival and Lincoln Center) and two in South America (Santiago A Mil Festival, Social Service of Commerce), one in Asia (Tokyo Performing Arts Market: TPAM), one in Australia (Australian Arts Council) and two in Europe (Edinburgh Fringe, Tanzmesse), and when our artists take their works abroad through these organizations we provide support in the form of airfare, pre-departure support in the form of consulting and advertising and then the necessary promotions, etc., for the actual performances in the foreign countries involved. In addition, we have cooperative mutual relationships with 18 organizations around the world and are participating members of 12 organizations.

**How have you gone about building your networks?**

First of all, we have divided the world up into five major regions, Asia, North America, South America, Europe and Australia, and then we decide which areas to develop in each of these regions. Once the regions have been decided, we do thorough research to find out what routes are available and what kind of network we should build to be most effective, and then we draw up proposals. When doing this regional research, we made much use of the resources of your Performing Arts Network Japan (laughs).

Let me cite last year's “Korean Dance Feature” project in Brazil as an example. When planning this project as a step toward building ourselves a base of operation in South America and entering the Brazilian market, we began our research in 2007 and in 2008 we made a focus on South America at PAMS with symposiums and seminars. At the same time, we invited the key person for the Brazil project to PAMS as a special presenter. After working for two years in this way to build the necessary network and cooperative relationship, the actual performances were held in Brazil in 2009. By making effective use of PAMS in this way we have been able to build networks in Asia in 2006, Europe in 2007, South America in 2008 and North America in 2009. For 2010, our focus region for overseas expansion

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will be Scandinavia. Through these overseas networks we have been able to send 24 companies abroad to perform in 2009 alone.

This indeed seems to be a strategically effective way to enter foreign markets.

This may be a result of my own work experience. After university I got a job in an advertising agency, and in that job I learned the skills of working according to project plans and strategies. Also, the fact that we are able to work strategically owes much to the young personnel who work with me in our International Exchange Dept. They are working constantly to develop new regions in creative new ways, and all I have to do is analyze and make judgments about what they come up with. It may be primarily this kind of teamwork that enables us to work strategically.

How did you personally become involved in the performing arts world?

At university I majored in Korean Literature and my professor had a connection with the theater world. That led me to begin to write plays and become active as a member of the university's theater club. This gave me many opportunities to work on-site in the theater world as a student, and enough to realize how hard it is to make a normal living in theater (laughs). That experience is what led me to join an ad agency after graduation, but I wasn't able to forget the theater, so after working for about three years, I returned to the performing arts world as a free-lance producer.

At the time, the term art management was little known or understood in South Korea, and the profession of producer was not an established thing either. In 1998 I started my own company out of my desire to create a new kind of production office with planning, publicity, marketing and company management as its main business areas. This got me involved with the ASSITEJI International Festival of the International Association of Theatre for Children and Young People (ASSITEJI), the Changmu International Arts Festival organized by the Changmu Dance Company, the SIDance program of the CID-UNESCO Korea Chapter, and other festivals. After that, I quit the company and spent six months in Mexico as a sort of mid-life vacation, and while I was there I got an offer to come back and work in the administrative section of the SIDance Seoul International Dance Festival. That job at SIDance got me thinking deeply about things like international exchange, joint performances, working with government agencies and international arts management professionalism. It was at this time that I cooperated with the Japan Foundation in organizing the Butoh Festival [held in Seoul in 2005].

After working there for a few years, I got the desire to apply the things I had learned in broader fields than dance alone, so I quit my post at the SIDance office in 2006 and went to work at Seoul Performing Arts Company, which is a public theater company. At that time, the producers and programmers of my generation, who were called the first generation of Korean performing arts festival professionals, all seemed to be experiencing doubts about their fields of work, just as I was. Lee Gyu-Seong was one such

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person. It was a time when people like us were deciding to leave the festival work to the next generation and begin to search for our own new realms where we could support them and the arts. As the next step after working at the Seoul Performing Arts Company I decided to come to work at KAMS to take my career to the next dimension. Still, my ultimate dream is to be a writer. Not necessarily writing plays or creative work like that, I want to write about human beings and the world. That is still my dream today.

This interview gives me the impression that you have always been moving upward in your career to the next stage with the same logical and strategic approach that you bring to your work. In your present job dealing with entering foreign markets, is there any area that you are placing special focus on strategically?

South Korea’s current administration has placed special emphasis on actively promoting Korean traditional arts in foreign markets. Based on this culture/arts policy, we at KAMS are putting particular efforts into the promotion of Korean traditional music overseas. Among Korea’s traditional performing arts are a variety of forms such as Pansori (percussion accompanied narrative singing) and dance, but among these, traditional Korean music has a special identity and uniqueness and, with the power of young musicians’ performances, we feel that it can be especially well received by international audiences. Also, compared with other genres, it is easier to put together a tour with.

However, unfortunately Korean traditional music is not well known in the outside world. That is why we are also engaged in other programs to help promote it overseas. We are presently doing research and analysis on the international music scene and building networks with music festivals and professionals in the world music field. In the last two years we have succeeded in arranging some 30 concerts for seven Korean musician groups to perform in six markets in Europe, North and South America and Australia. And we plan to continue expanding this in the future. The BBC has done a program introducing Korean music, and while we are building these networks, I want us to realize ideas for approaching internationally renowned media like National Geographic.

What visions and issues do you see for the future?

In the five years since KAMS was launched, we have succeeded in building considerable networks and PAMS has become known internationally as an arts market. I believe that now is the time for us to begin moving to the next stage and taking on the next set of issues. This year we will be launching a number of new projects.

One of these is a “Visiting Arts Joint Cooperation” project that we will be carrying on over a five-year period with several main theaters and festivals in the United Kingdom with the aim of strengthening our cooperative relationship with the UK and increasing our ability to work globally. Eventually we want to see collaborative works created through this program touring internationally in our networks. Other new projects this year will be a

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“Joint Cooperation with Dance Info Finland” and an “NPN Joint Cooperation” which we hope will strengthen our cooperative relationships with the USA and Finland. Until now, a lot of our focus has been on helping Korean artists perform abroad, but now, through these kinds of cooperative projects, we hope to build a more stable foundation of two-way cooperative exchange relationships. This will represent an attempt to build deeper international exchange from the long-term standpoint, I believe.

We are also working on programming intensive and multifaceted introductions of Korean culture in the form of Korea features, but so far there has only been one such program held in an overseas city. From now on we will be working to strengthen the support system for performance tours within the different regions. In addition to support for airfare and peripheral aspects of touring (PR, etc.), we plan to provide consulting and support to help companies conduct tours of several cities.

In the field of theater, we plan to begin full-fledged support for translation projects. Theater involves the language barrier, which makes it difficult for the theater works we present in PAMS Choice showcases to find overseas performance opportunities.

In another area, we are in cross-departmental discussions with the Korean Foundation, which is under the umbrella of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, about ways to strengthen our support budgets and systems.

One of the big issues for the future is surely training of human resources capable of working in the field on international exchange programs and collaborative production projects, and also strengthening the understanding of international society and functional capabilities of private-sector companies to engage in sustainable exchanges.

### Are you involved in any specific projects toward those aims?

A service like ours, and the programs we engage in, are all dependent on human resources. No matter how KAMS may work to build overseas networks and create opportunities for overseas performances, it is meaningless if there aren't companies to develop on those opportunities and engage in sustainable exchanges and overseas activities. All KAMS can do is provide support on a short-term basis. Once we have helped a company get an opportunity to perform overseas in a particular country, I believe the ideal situation is for that opportunity not to end as a one-time event but for that company to then go on and build on the experience and develop their own capability to develop overseas markets for themselves and engage in meaningful exchanges. The problem I am most concerned with right now is how to pass the baton on from the public organizations like ours to the private-sector organizations and companies and have them become able to engage in exchange and overseas expansion.

To tackle this issue, we have established our “International Exchange Academy” at KAMS to train people in the field of international exchange. It is a program that offers a four-month curriculum to educate people in the basics of international exchange, practical skills, with separate workshops for the different arts genres. We are also actively engaged in international

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consulting services, regarding things like participation in the Edinburgh Fringe and developing markets in North and South America and Europe. Beginning this year, I want to initiate a project aimed at building new networks to strengthen producers, while also continuing our educational program.

For someone like me who has no formal training in arts management, it has been very educational for me to hear what KAMS has achieved in the fields of arts management and international exchange. Also, I am often using KAMS frequently as a source for quickly gathering information about what is happening in the arts and culture in South Korea. I am looking forward to your activities in the future. Thank you very much for this informative interview.