

‘A night united through music’; overseas Korean artists take stage in their homeland

‘2026 Korean Festival’ held free of charge at Seoul’s Sky Art Hall on Jan. 13

The Overseas Koreans Agency hosted the “2026 Korean Festival, Tonghyang (同響) - Shared Resonance,” a stage where overseas Korean artists unite through music in their homeland.

The stage, held at 7 p.m. on Jan. 13 at the Sky Art Hall in Yeowon Culture Center, Gangseo Ward, Seoul, was prepared to foster mutual understanding and shared bonds between overseas Koreans and domestic citizens through the medium of culture and arts. The performance served as a cultural exchange venue where overseas Korean artists, active in different corners of the world, connected on one stage under the theme “Same Resonance.”

Performers included Edwin Kim, a Korean American pianist and music director; Chloe Kim, a Korean Australian drummer; and Grace Kelly, a Korean American jazz saxophonist. Joining them on stage was the Gwangju Koryoin Village Children’s Choir, composed of repatriated compatriot children, creating a moving performance that bridged generations.

Children of different nationalities and backgrounds filled the concert hall with a shared resonance that day. The Koryoin Village Children’s Choir took the stage in traditional Central Asian attire, performing a medley of children’s songs, “Our Language Education” and “Beautiful World” (lyrics and music by Park Hak-gi) from the Koryoin Village’s representative original musical, “I Am Koryo-in.”

The children’s voices, resonating in harmony with the conductor’s gestures, transcended the journey of migration and settlement, blending into a single chord. As the performance concluded, the audience erupted in a wave of heartfelt applause.

Founded in 2017, the children’s choir comprises descendants of Koryoin independence fighters, including children aged 4 and 5, as well as children of Koryoin from diverse backgrounds, such as Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Ukraine and Russia. Differences in language and culture became natural learning experiences during



A performance by the Gwangju Koryoin Village Children’s Choir

rehearsals. In the practice room where Korean and Russian languages mingled, the children became each other’s bridges, and music became the fastest common language to connect hearts.

“Though the children have different nationalities and backgrounds, they share the identity and pride of being ‘Koryoin’ through music,” said professor Cho Jeong-hee of Honam University, the choir’s director and conductor. “The moment they sing, the children’s expressions and voices change, and that transformation is the greatest reward of this activity.”

Alongside their performance activities, the Gwangju Koryoin Village Children’s Choir also serves as cultural ambassadors, promoting awareness of Koryoin Village and the history of the diaspora. In 2022, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs produced an online promotional video featuring the choir’s performance, introducing Korean culture and the story of the Koryoin community to the world.

OKA Commissioner Kim Kyung-hyup said, “This festival was organized to create an opportunity for the overseas Korean community and the motherland to grow closer through culture and the arts.” 