Jyväskylän yliopiston julkaisuarkisto
Jyväskylä University Digital Archive

UNIVERSITY OF JYVÄSKYLÄ

This is an electronic reprint of the original article.
This reprint *may differ* from the original in pagination and typographic detail.

Author(s): Cathcart, Adam; Korhonen, Pekka

Title: Death and Transfiguration : The Late Kim Jong-il Aesthetic in North Korean Cultural Production

Year: 2017

Version:

Please cite the original version:

Cathcart, A., & Korhonen, P. (2017). Death and Transfiguration : The Late Kim Jong-il Aesthetic in North Korean Cultural Production. Popular Music and Society, 40(4), 390-405. https://doi.org/10.1080/03007766.2016.1158987

All material supplied via JYX is protected by copyright and other intellectual property rights, and duplication or sale of all or part of any of the repository collections is not permitted, except that material may be duplicated by you for your research use or educational purposes in electronic or print form. You must obtain permission for any other use. Electronic or print copies may not be offered, whether for sale or otherwise to anyone who is not an authorised user.

This is an electronic version of an article published in Popular Music and Society.

To cite this article: Adam Cathcart & Pekka Korhonen (2016): Death and Transfiguration: The Late Kim Jong-il Aesthetic in North Korean Cultural Production, Popular Music and Society, DOI: 10.1080/03007766.2016.1158987

To link to this article: http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/03007766.2016.1158987

Death and Transfiguration:

The Late Kim Jong-il Aesthetic in North Korean Cultural Production

By Adam Cathcart and Pekka Korhonen

Adam Cathcart

[a.cathcart@leeds.ac.uk]

Lecturer in Chinese History

University of Leeds

LS2 9JT

United Kingdom

Pekka Korhonen

[pekka.a.korhonen@jyu.fi]

Professor of World Politics

Department of Social Sciences & Philosophy

University of Jyväskylä

FI-40014

Finland

Death and Transfiguration:

The Late Kim Jong-il Aesthetic in North Korean Cultural Production

Abstract: This article assesses the official music scene in Pyongyang over a span of five dramatic years, surveying how changes in the field of music from 2009 to 2014 mirrored and in some cases presaged North Korean dynastic succession and political consolidation. The article draws upon a new abundance of performance data on North Korean musical groups, data which we argue is important but has largely been ignored or mischaracterized heretofore. The central crisis dealt with in the article is the decline and demise of Kim Jong-il, the architect of North Korea's musical culture. In his final years, Kim Jong-il assented to the creation of a new leading musical group known as the Unhasu Orchestra, promoted a song ("Footsteps") about his son's succession, and was commemorated as a passing figure even while still alive (in the film *Wish*). This article reads the transition of power to the young Kim Jong-un in musical terms, revealing churn in the cultural sector. The text therefore advances questions about the role of music in the North Korean society generally, and will appeal to readers interested in North Korean culture, as well as to scholars of music and politics in general.

Keywords: music, North Korea, Kim Jong-il, Kim Jong-un, Jang Song-taek, Footsteps, North Korean film music, Unhasu Orchestra, Moranbong Band

Song as Savior

On December 13, 2013, the North Korean state media announced the execution of Jang Song-taek, the uncle of Supreme Leader Kim Jong-un and a top official in his own right. The news clearly came as a shock within the country. For the prior two years, Jang had been seen as a kind of "regent" figure, even standing next to Kim Jong-un during moments of great stress and prestige, such as when the country launched a missile into outer space in December 2012. Jang Song-taek was clearly among the country's top leaders, if not the formal "Number Two." Accordingly, the announcement of his death – and its ferocity – came as a shock; one foreign photographer captured looks of total bewilderment on the faces of citizens reading the news in a Pyongyang metro station (Guttenfelder). Citizens and officials were forced to rapidly adapt to the emerging narrative of a putsch attempt within the uppermost circles of power, which would surely have repercussions for the whole society.

On December 15, two days after the abrupt execution, a camera crew from a North Korean state media outlet made its way out of Pyongyang to document how the Jang purge was being received by the masses. The destination of these reporters was a factory in Hamhung, an industrial city on the east coast, known for its vinylon, a synthetic polyesther-type of fabric. That this was no 'ordinary' visit was made particularly clear by Jang's death warrant, which, amid its almost incoherent lashing out and pinning of blame for all hosts of policy ills on the now-dead man, had made explicit his interference with the vinylon sector, one of North Korea's proudest achievements and least successful exports. On this day, while the cameras recorded his colleagues denouncing Jang for his crimes and corruption, the chief engineer of the vinylon factory, Jong Pong-su sat at a table, beautifully groomed, wistfully looking at a Party newspaper while mulling over what he would say.

When the blinding lights from the cameras turned upon him, his performance was impressive. Mr. Jong was, after all, not being called upon to recite some merely pro forma diatribe against the American imperialists, which would have only required him to repeat tropes which he had learned as a child. What was called for instead was a denunciation of a man who had been by the Respected General's side at more or less every critical juncture since he had taken power, a person who had helped to lead the funeral cortege of Kim Jong-il, and been the son-in-law of the national founder Kim Il-song. Just one week prior, Jang Song-taek had been a member in good standing of the Korean Workers' Party. Something vehement but not terribly specific was clearly called for; after all, in the earliest days of the purge, there were only a handful of editorials, a few broadcasts, and a front-page newspaper song of loyalty to Kim Jong-un to base one's comments upon. No one knew how deep the purge would go – and presumably, it could go even inside the gates of the vinylon factory, upending the career of one Jong Pong-su. Faced with the situation, the manager's comments on camera were masterful.

Gesturing at the pages of the Party newspaper spread out in front of him, he said:

> The song 'We Know Only You' was carried on the daily *Rodong Sinmun*. The song represents our feelings. All our staff members chorused the song. As the song reads, only respected Kim Jong Un is in our hearts. With this faith, we are not afraid of anything and there is no fortress we cannot scale. Those with faltering faith, can go. We with the faith, we are singing the song. (Stimmekoreas)

In this deadly serious situation, Chief Engineer Jong provided a perfect answer. He evaded taking any personal stand on the issue, and he especially evaded actually condemning Jang Song-taek, recognizing that factional fighting might be ongoing. Simultaneously, he was able

to display absolute faith towards the current leadership. Faith is a necessary element here, because after nearly 70 years of socialist rule in North Korea, the governing ethos of the country can no more be characterized as ideological in a communist and revolutionary sense, but rather as religious, in a banal, everyday sense of the word. Mircea Eliade, a historian and philosopher of world religions, has studied the underlying cosmological myths that maintain the social and political structure of societies. At this bottom level there is no discernible difference between religious and political myths. The world is in both depicted as consisting of an organized Cosmos, where members of the society live, and which is familiar and safe compared with the unknown and potentially dangerous Chaos reigning outside of the organization (Eliade). This basic social psychological opposition between a sheltered homeland and suspect foreign countries can be observed in a mild form even in open democratic societies, but in North Korea the propagandistic depiction of the outside as constantly hostile makes the myth very strong. A strong cosmological myth of danger calls for an accompanying myth of a protector, and this is the social role of the leading Kims. They embody in their persons the protective task of the state, and song lyrics typically encourage citizens to place unwavering faith on them. Song lyrics practically never mention anything about possible enemies inside the Cosmos, attesting to the fact that seven decades after the socialist revolution all large scale threats within the society to the ruling dynasty have been eliminated long ago. Chief Engineer Jong thus followed strictly the norms of the mythical ethos of his society when he concentrated solely on his faith towards the leader.

The lyrics of the song he referred to (우리는 당신밖에 모른다 / Urinŭn tangsinbagge morŭnda in Korean) display the necessary degree of faith in plain words, such as in the starting verse:

이 조선 이끄는 힘 억세다

인민의 운명을 한몸에 안고

우리가 바라는 꿈과 리상

모두다 꽃펴주실 분

위대한 김정은동지 우리는 당신밖에 모른다

위대한 김정은동지 당신께 충실하리라

The power guiding our Korea is strong.

He secures the destiny of the people,

embracing our dreams and ideals.

He makes all the flowers bloom.

Great Comrade Kim Jong Un, we know only you.

Great Comrade Kim Jong Un, we are faithful to you.

The other verses are similar. They simply deny the existence of any competing authority to Supreme Leader Kim Jong-un in the minds of North Korean people. The song appears to have been rapidly put together for the occasion, and was the product of a collaborative team working in the party ideological apparatus: Its military rhythmic beat was composed by otherwise unknown Kim Un-ryong and Hwang Jin-yong, with lyrics written by Cha Ho-gun and Ri Ji-song.

No sooner had the song appeared, two short days after Jang's execution, than it was performed by the State Merited Chorus of the Korean People's Army, and blasted throughout the country via radio, TV, and loudspeakers in public places in cities. Its lyrics were printed in *Rodong Sinmun*, the main newspaper in North Korea from which all other daily mass papers derive. It was a clear message for the faithful, demonstrating the correct way of thinking amid a confusing situation. Chief Engineer Jong had understood it well. The

substitution of song texts for extemporaneous speech was, in the North Korean context of the time, the behavior of a wise man.

Music in a Totalitarian State

In North Korea today, music is part of the lifeblood of regime loyalty. Melodies and lyrics create common emotional and epistemological linkages among the citizens, as seen in the narrative above, as well as between them and the leadership. Songs continuously announce loyalty to the leader. The intensity of their broadcasting is heightened during dramatic moments, such as the Jang Song-taek purge, but their stream to the consciousness of citizens is never ending. Musicians and writers are therefore among the best-treated cultural elites within the system, holding high political importance due to their centrality within the propaganda apparatus (Jang).

According to theoretical insights and empirical observations emerging on one hand within politological studies of nationalistic musical forms, and on the other within evolutionary neuroscience, there is a long historical linkage between the development and spread of musical forms among human populations and the strengthening of psychological bonds between interacting group members. In open, democratic and commercialized societies the link between the state and music is easily hidden below the allure of international popular culture, but in all states there exists also a specific niche for nationalistically spirited music life, often organized as a combination of the state and the market. From the point of view of nationalism, strong mass psychological effects take place in recurring group rituals, such as national festivities, where music is in a much more important role than speeches and other official narratives. Singing together has the strongest effect, but also listening to music in concerts and the media create durable emotions of “we” in the minds of people

(Sondermann). The German sociologist Ulrich Beck has called this kind of music the equivalent of *Pater Noster* prayers at the national context (Beck 117). In North Korea, where no independent or market based musical production exists, the creation of national bonding through music is clearly observable in practically all published songs.

Neuroscientific theory explains why this happens in the human brain. Two mechanisms appear to be simultaneously involved, one psychological and the other chemical. Music provides an external rhythmic framework, which facilitates synchronic movement and emotion between individuals, which on its turn make people's consciousness merge with that of the other participants. Self-other merging as a consequence of inter-personal synchrony is a strong psychological state leading to non-sexual and non-kinship social bonding. At the hormonal level it has been clinically observed that humans have a pervasive aptitude for entrainment to rhythmic beat, particularly if it is embedded in music, and the effect is heightened if this involves synchronizing movements with other people. This releases in their bodies endorphins and other endogenous opiates, which simply makes them feel elated. This takes place even when people only listen to music passively; the rhythm and the melody by themselves stimulate the release of these hormones (Tarr). When a narrative in the form of lyrics is added, national level mass psychological effects can be created.

A totalitarian state thus cannot be built and continue its existence without systematic attention to its music. North Korean leadership seems to know that well, and is exceptionally closely to the musical establishment. The current leader Kim Jong-un's mother was a ballerina in an opera troupe, and his wife used to sing in a chamber orchestra. The highest leadership not only establishes ensembles, guide their rehearsals and attend their concerts, but also in a very personals sense are parts of the musical establishment. The well educated artists in top ensembles, on their turn, tend to be sons and daughters of Pyongyang elite families, augmenting the organic unity between the state, party and music.

North Korea is hardly unique in Asia in taking great care of its music scene, or the rest of the world, at least in the historical periods for which we have literary information. Already in Plato's perfectly planned republic, great attention was placed on music in the education of citizens, recommending ”gymnastic for bodies and music for the soul” (Plato II 376e). As the people had to be continuously prepared for war, they needed to develop strong bodies, but because people with strong bodies can be dangerous, their minds had to be molded through music to discipline and loyalty towards the regime (Brann). Similarly, for the sages of the ancient Chinese past, music was a vital element both in education and in politics. For Confucius, music was the crowning of a man’s education (Low): “Wake yourself up with poetry, establish your character in *li* [righteousness] and complete your education in music,” he relayed to his students (Confucius Ch 8, 8). As Marina Wong comments, both Plato and Confucius regarded music from a moral perspective, as the ultimate means with which to develop personalities suitable for living in an orderly society (Wong). Given their more recent concerns with order, it is perhaps not surprising to see such fundamental congruity between the views of post-1945 North Korean leaders about music and the views of Plato and Confucius.

During the modern period, the use of music in the service of the state has only become more systematic. Even before the breakdown of the imperial systems in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in Asia, music was an area of great education and political indoctrination in East Asian states (Harrison). This has been particularly true for states waging a total war, or otherwise being under a war-like pressure, such as China during the Cultural Revolution. Notwithstanding, this is also true for states living in a constant, albeit low intensity conflict with most of the rest of the world, such as North Korea. Songs are a kind of lifeline for the

state, as their audio aspects, melody, rhythm, and instrumentation bring the messages of the lyrics in a convincing and emotionally rousing way to the consciousness of listeners.

Musicians therefore serve as an important defensive element to the regime. Apparently all musicians in the DPRK have a military rank, even though they, especially classical musicians in concerts, usually wear civilian clothing. They are loyal North Korean soldiers, whose task is to fight against capitalism, imperialism, and unwanted foreign influences in general, on the battlefields of art and cultural production.

The use of the term "cultural battlefield" is not a notion projected on to North Korea, for the state's own perspective on the arts is strongly focused on a fear of cultural infiltration. In a context of "cultural warfare" with westernized influence surrounding the state, cultural vigor is an important element in North Korea's defense tactics; which refer regularly to the breakdown of communism in the Eastern bloc after 1989. Such a situation works against most of our assumptions of how culture is internationally shared among nations, and especially among artistic and cultural communities, as a way of increasing creativity and enriching human life. Even in the Soviet Union, a degree of internationalism was tolerated, because the empire was a world power and needed suitable multi-level interactions with the rest of the world. Nevertheless, the situation was full of ambiguities regarding specific music styles like jazz and rock, although even they were tolerated to a limited extent so that small subcultures could emerge (Yurchak 162-164). North Korean cultural bureaucrats like Kim Ki-nam, who studied in Moscow in the mid-1950s, are familiar with this precedent, and endeavor not to open up their country to the same degree, much less engage in "de-Stalinization." In state media commentaries, citizens are encouraged to remind themselves about East Germany, where Western cultural penetration was the proverbial tip of the spear that heralded the destruction of the German Democratic Republic.

Even though North Korea publishes an amount of its music, movies and documentaries in the internet, displaying a clear interest in voicing its viewpoints to the rest of the world, its general posture is defensive against the outside, and no artistic subcultures existing separate from the state have been heard of. Difference with the Soviet Union is rather of degree than of kind. This is good to remember in analysis of cultural aspects of the country, as in this field there is a tendency for a belief that North Korea may somehow be "opening up" to surface time and again. As *Rodong Sinmun* put it in a historical analysis guarding against "bourgeois cultural poisoning," "countries which were building socialism collapsed overnight because they allowed bourgeois life style, American way of life to prevail in society" (Korean Central News Agency).

Musicians are at the front line of this battle, because music so easily pervades all elements of a society and because melodies so easily cross cultural boundaries. Yet, as in the Soviet Union or post-Mao China, there is also tension between upholding the purity of the revolutionary tradition and updating the besieged culture; new elements need to be added every now and then. Even North Korea cannot be hermetically sealed from the cultural winds of the rest of the world.

The Kim dynasty, now in the third generation, have lavished their time and attention on the performing arts and placed high emphasis on the funding for those endeavors. Cultural and physical production are often paired; Pyongyang already has a burgeoning line up of stages, but new concert halls are also being built. Music was and remains a key element for the North Korean state in depicting the life, legacy, and policy direction of Kim Jong-il. After Kim's death, musical events were a very important part of the means by which the state cemented home the message that it was very much still the country of the Kim family regime, drawing from a panoply of symbols which often circled back to Mount Paektu, the mythical peak associated with both anti-Japanese resistance and the Kims. Statues, which could prove

the fact in a more substantial and concrete manner, took months to erect, but orchestral cantatas and political songs were whipped up almost instantaneously.

Music and Late Kim Jong-il Culture

Almost precisely two years prior to the purge and execution of Jang Song-taek that began this article, the North Korean leader Kim Jong-il was living out his last days. Prior to his death on December 17, 2011 – allegedly from overwork on his train en route to an on-site inspection – Kim Jong-il had been in failing health. Kim Jong-il's physical decline in the years 2009-2011 was painful to observe; his hair began to fall out, his teeth became more yellowed, he appeared in public wearing a heavy winter coat and gloves, and his movements became clumsy. He was the picture of decline. When Kim Jong-un was finally revealed to the public and the world (both for the first time and as the successor) in September 2010, the young man was clearly at pains to appear deferential to his father. Yet, he appeared all the more shockingly vital and even cherubic by comparison to his dying father. Topics that were essentially forbidden in the printed word – that a generational succession was coming – began to enter into artistic depictions within North Korean official production. Kim Jong-il's legacy cementing began to occur via the artistic bureaucracy, and composers and dramatists began to slowly introduce themes into official culture to eulogize Kim Jong-il in a slightly different manner, rendering him a historic figure prior to his death while presaging a new era to come.

North Koreans seeking guidance about the tone which the new successor would set, or the fact that there was a new leadership on the way, would not find such in newspaper editorials, but again in the form of songs. The prime example is the military march 'Footsteps' (발걸음 Parkorŭm). The song made its start in 2009, and the North Korean people who heard and sang it were intended very much to know what it meant. In North Korea important changes

are not necessarily announced directly; people simply have to notice them. A high degree of alertness and interpretative skills are expected of them. This pertained especially to the delicate matter of the leadership change, understood to be necessary after Kim Jong-il had his first stroke in 2008. As Rudiger Frank convincingly demonstrates, this change was expected to take place gradually over a number of years, perhaps a decade or two, in the same way that the change from Kim Il-song to Kim Jong-il had taken place from the late 1960s onwards (Frank, North Korea after Kim Jong Il: The Risks of Improvisation). At the very least, Kim Jong-il was expected to live to see the state commemorate his 70th birthday (16 February 2012) in climactic fashion, and the 100th anniversary of his father's birth (15 April 2012). There could be no question of Kim Jong-il stepping aside while still alive, even as a collective leadership of which his son would be a part was clearly taking shape. In an information environment in which Kim Jong-un had yet to be revealed to the public, but everyone knew something was about to happen, a song was the ideal vehicle for succession politics to proceed.

State propagation of the song ‘Footsteps’ started in 2009. This was simultaneous to Kim Jong-un starting occasionally to accompany his father to on-site inspections, but prior to him appearing in any media coverage of those events. The connection was also noticed abroad by North Korea watchers (La Corée du Nord de A à Z). The song's composition and lyrics were written by a renowned composer named Ri Jong-o, and it was performed by large choirs, especially the State Merited Chorus of the People's Liberation Army. It had a forceful uplifting beat and suggestive lyrics, such as in the following verse:

척척 척척척 발걸음

우리 김대장 발걸음

2 월의 위업 받들어

앞으로 척척척

발걸음 발걸음 더 높이 울려퍼져라

찬란한 미래를 앞당겨 척척척

"Tramp, tramp, tramp!" sound the footsteps

Our Leader Kim's footsteps

Serving the feats of February

Forward the footsteps go

The steps resonate loudly

Leading us to a glittering future

The interpretative key to the lyrics is the calculated ambiguity of the lines and expressions. The Korean title "Tejang" in the expression ”Leader Kim” means literally "great commander", but it is not specific. It can be used for generals and admirals, but can simply denote a commanding leader irrespective of any particular field. Such a term fit the situation in 2009, when Kim Jong-un had yet to be appointed to any specific high administrative post or title. Another key element in the song was that the name of the leader was not spelled out in full. North Korean songs practically always mention the name of the leader in full, but here listeners easily could understand that the song was not actually about Kim Jong-il. The month of February was a metaphor for him due to his birthday, but the tempo of the melody indicated a vigorous leader walking with strong steps, and this evidently did not refer to the visibly weakening older Kim. At the same time, as the song did not name Kim Jong-un by the name specifically, it could not be said to start to build any competing cult around him; the name rather served as an intergenerational reference. The song simply announced that the next generation with youthful energy was walking to the scene, supporting the ailing father in leading the nation towards a glorious future. In this way, without any official proclamation, a

song played on national radio, broadcast through ubiquitous loudspeakers in cities, and lyrically displayed in posters at work sites (Korea Herald), was used for announcing the citizens that a well planned leadership change was in due time taking place, and that everything was under control.

Along with songs, North Korean cinema after 2009 produced a number of offerings during what might be called the "late Kim Jong-il era" that seemed to be preparing for his death. A signal sensitive example is the film *Wish*, directed by Jang In-hak, produced in 2011, and the centerpiece of the 13th Pyongyang Film Festival in 2012. The film was briefly watchable in YouTube in 2013, but has since been deleted from there; all that remains is its trailer (koryogroup). The film did not refer to the leadership transition explicitly, but that transition formed the unmistakable backdrop to the film which spoke to the average citizen, encouraging her to revere the leader and continue to struggle among everyday hardships.

The plot of the story involves a family making sacrifices for the future prosperity of the country. The story revolves around a housewife in Pyongyang, where she lives in an apartment with her young son. Her husband is an officer in the Korean People's Army; very busy and always away from home working on the Huichon Dam far north of Pyongyang, boring a tunnel through a mountain. North Korea has one of the largest armies in the world, but that does not mean that the soldiers would all be standing in guard on the South Korean border; most of them actually work as construction workers. One theme of the film is the constant power shortages suffered by inhabitants of Pyongyang, and their wish to get the power station at Huichon functioning.

The film is about the discrepancy of different kinds of wishes, which makes life in the present a constant sorrow. The wife wishes the husband to be at home, and the son wishes to have one single family photograph where also the father would be present. The father-soldier,

however, wished for another kind of photograph, namely one where the Leader would honor his work brigade by standing in the same group photograph with it, providing both the absolute symbol of honor that would befall on a North Korean citizen and political safety. For the sake of the honor of a military officer and a labor hero he neglects his family, being a perfect incarnation of Stakhanovite work morality. Visiting briefly home one night after several months of absence, he does not have time for a short tender moment with his wife, even though the son is sound asleep in his own room; he has to take care of the affairs of his workers. He never stays home long enough to take the photo with his son. The photo with the Leader is the most important thing in his life. This wish is so honorable that it drowns the private wishes of the mother and son into insignificance – but its centrality throughout the film highlights the feeling of the constant absence of Kim Jong-il. At one point during the boring of a tunnel through the mountain, the father and his men become ecstatic with longing for Kim Jong-il, whose tears for the people are embodied by the water and mist coursing around the edges of the tunnel. We can see the leader a couple of times in a photo, and we can see crowds enthusiastically shouting and waving to him, but we are never shown the real living Kim Jong-il. His absence becomes therefore the carrying theme of the film, and we can understand why this should be dealt with gingerly at the time when he was very clearly in physical decline.

The film has a kind of happy ending. First the wife, who is a singer and dancer, together with her military unit gets her photo with the Leader, who was so impressed with her unit's musical performance in support of the Huichon efforts that he also provided the group with luxury accommodations at a high-rise hotel in Pyongyang. Later, the husband is also bestowed the same honor – the wished-for photograph. This manly officer is therefore shown on the verge of crying when the framed photograph is handed to him in a solemn ceremony. Yet, he does not return home. When the Huichon project ends, he is the first to volunteer to

another dangerous construction project even farther away. Thus the mother never got him to stay at home, and the son never got his photo with father. Private wishes were not fulfilled. Personal life in the present had to be lived in sacrifices for the national good that was waiting for everyone in the future. The film is thus about a utopia, which necessarily has to be transferred away from the present. Utopias have a specific temporal and moral structure. As the psycholinguist and theoretician of social behavior Steven Pinker points out, social utopias promise happiness forever, with no limit to the time frame, and exactly because of this also their moral value has no limits (Pinker loc. 7294). It cannot be measured in any scale, but it candidly goes above individual interests and wishes. Utopians presuppose a purely utilitarian morality, where the larger good in the future for everyone crushes individual wishes at the present into insignificance. Nevertheless, in a heroic movie this callous human condition in a utopian society can be told in an attractive manner, with the accompaniment of rousing music. This probably can be considered typical of the late Kim Jong-il era aesthetic.

The film is full of music, because songs so perfectly conveyed the psychological and political messages to the audience. The thematically most important song was Tansume (단숨에), variously translated as ”Without a Break”, and ”At Once”. It is a military march composed in 2003 by one of the most distinguished North Korean composers, Hwang Jin-yong, with lyrics written by equally distinguished Yun Du-gun. The song was given first a new life in this 2011 film, and a little later in 2012 by the Moranbong Band, which turned it into big national and YouTube hit. It can be considered as the character song for the late Kim Jong-il and early Kim Jong-un eras. Like in the case of "Footsteps," its verses are rather similar:

훈련장에 나선 병사는

단숨에란 말을 사랑해

걸음마다 그 말 울리며

펄펄나는 용맹 키우네

산을 넘어도 단숨에

강을 건너도 단숨에

번개같이 불이 번쩍 단숨에

단숨에 단숨에 단숨에

Soldiers training in the field

love the words ”at once!”.

It sounds in their every step,

molding them to be swift and fearless.

They cross the mountain at once,

they cross the river at once.

Like lightning their fire flames at once,

at once, at once, at once.

In an early scene of the film, the father writes the name of the song on a wooden plank, which indicated for the audience what his working style was like. Towards the end of the film, when victory is in sight, we hear the song itself. The whole song is simply about absolute emotional dedication and speed in fulfilling tasks. This is the way a good soldier and worker should behave. Thinking is not necessary, only rapid disciplined action is.

The physical manifestation of all of this cultural production urging rapid construction, the Huichon Dam, was finally completed in 2012, after the death of Kim Jong-il. It had been one of his dearest projects, launched in the year of initiatives in 2009, and he inspected its

progress altogether eight times, meaning that even in his weakened condition he travelled there two or three times a year. Kim had clearly been in a great hurry; North Korean media claimed that normally a project of that scale would have taken a decade, but this one was finalized in three years (North Korean Economy Watch) (North Korean Economy Watch 2012). In other words, it was indeed undertaken with "Tansume speed," and the film *Wish* was in a material sense a rather accurate depiction of reality in military families.

Unfortunately, just like in the film, in reality the sought-after utopia did not arrive. There soon emerged reports that during the dry Korean winter, when the need for power was greatest, there was not enough water to create needed amounts of electricity. When the rains arrived in 2013, the dam could not be filled to capacity, because the structure was too weak. The combination of furious speed, shoddy materials, and unskilled labor could not produce a perfect result. The South Korean rumor mill also claimed that the dam directly caused the death of its initiator. The rumor was that after hearing of the weaknesses of the structure in 17 December 2011, Kim Jong-il went to a rage, and got his second stroke (Ryall). We do not know whether this is true or not. The official North Korean announcement simply says that he died in a train of heart attack caused by mental and physical strain during a field inspection trip (Korean Central News Agency). However, the fact that the Huichon dam was not mentioned as having failed due to economic sabotage by Jang Song-taek might indicate otherwise, and North Korea continues pell-mell construction of smaller dams and electricity projects throughout the mountainous republic.

Kim Jong-il's Orchestras

Kim Jong-il's personal imprint on North Korean culture, however, goes far beyond films which evoke him, dating back some forty-five years. From the time of his elevation into the

propaganda apparatus in the late 1960s, Kim Jong-il took an active hand in reforming the country's opera and film production, in many respects following the lead of Jiang Qing in China in the early 1970s. He thereafter acted in an external "editorial" position to all forms of art and cultural production, much like his father's old mentor, Josef Stalin, had done in the Soviet Union (Yurchak 13). Adrian Buzo has written that "in a state governed by personal autocracy the significance of the character, personality and life experiences of the leader is self-evident" in the artistic products of the state; it is very hard to argue against this case in North Korea (Buzo 1). Kim Jong-il's lack of experience as a musician did not prevent him from moving in his thirties into managing and controlling the North Korean art scene on a large scale, from music and opera to film and theatre. One of his most important creations was the Mansudae Art Troupe in 1969. Its first task was to create under Kim Jong-il's guidance the revolutionary opera *Flower Girl*, which it has thus far performed nearly 800 times. The troupe has over the decades diversified also to many other song and dance numbers. In 1971 he created another large ensemble called the Sea of Blood Opera Troupe, which, as its name suggests, took responsibility of performing the *Sea of Blood* opera, and later also other operas. It is arguably the cultural group in Pyongyang most fully associated with him, and his creative work with the ensemble forms a pillar of the hagiographies about him, along with the film studio work. Both of these ensembles have performed also abroad, in various socialist countries during the Cold War period, and after that in China. Both of them are active also nowadays, although their touring activity has been curtailed since 2012 and their musicians are sometimes more heralded for going to work sites as agit-prop teams rather than going in for full operatic performances in the capital.

In the 1980s, when he was in his forties and had achieved the supreme position in North Korean cultural life, Kim Jong-il decided to create also popular music ensembles. The Wangjaesan Light Music Band, which he established in 1983, included also dancers and

circus performers, and was meant especially for on-stage performances. However, it employed also musicians with classical education, and parts of its performances were light chamber music. The most typical popular music group was the Pochonbo Electronic Ensemble, which, as its name suggests, used electronic instruments, and in TV-concerts glittering lights in its background. Established in 1985, most of its work was done in studio. It has left a trail of over 150 recorded CDs, most of them Korean revolutionary and popular folk songs, but including also Korean translations of foreign songs, such as Russian, Spanish, Chinese and Japanese. They recorded also in foreign languages, and many of their CDs were technically edited and manufactured in Eastern European studios for international marketing. These light music ensembles were clearly meant for indoctrinating ordinary North Koreans with easy to sing and dance popular melodies.

All North Korean military branches also have their own orchestras and choirs. As demonstrated in the film *Wish*, there is no real dividing line between civilian, political, and military music; all ensembles serve the state and maintain the leadership cult with their productions. They have different emphasis in their styles, but a song created by one ensemble in North Korea could, essentially, be performed by all the other ensembles. The result would of course sound quite different whether the performer was a large male military choir, or a single female backed by electric guitars and keyboards, but the message of the song would still be the same.

The Unhasu Orchestra

If rapid creation of musical ensembles was the order of the day for Kim Jong-il in the 1970s and 80s, by the late 2000s the pattern of musical culture he had laid out was in need of an update. His interest in the cultural field had by no means waned, but his physical strength was beginning to lag. It appears that Kim Jong Il's first stroke in 2008 revealed for the leadership

that time was running low for the elder Kim. Rather than slowing things down, this vulnerability led to a frenzy of initiatives in various fields. Some of them were utterly misguided, like the disastrous November 2009 anti-market currency reform, which wiped out savings of the emerging entrepreneurial class and seriously disrupted the economy (Haggard). Agreements were signed in the same year with the Chinese leadership to lease two North Korean islands for the development of ill-fated Special Economic Zones. Upon his death, Jang Song-taek would be blamed for both occurrences. These signs revealed a leadership that was grasping out at unusual and poorly-prepared ideas.

Initiatives at the cultural field were more sensible. To the top of the North Korean musical scene rose in 2009 the Unhasu Orchestra (은하수관현악단 / Unasu kwanyŏn aktan). Like the introduction of a heir with the new song ’Footsteps’ by military choirs, the forming and promotion of the Unhasu Orchestra can be seen as an attempt by the state to invigorate the image of the leader in North Korean public life in the post-stroke situation. Kim Jong-il was frequently seen at the group's concerts. The orchestra was also selected to play a key role in North Korean new diplomatic and cultural initiatives. Kim Jong-il himself travelled in 2010 to China on a diplomatic mission, aided by the cultural offensive of sending the Sea of Blood Opera Troupe to tour China for several weeks. In autumn 2011 diplomatic negotiations were started about sending the Unhasu Orchestra on a tour to France. That publicity tour would have coincided with Kim Jong-il’s 70th birthday in February 2012, but because of his sudden death in December 2011, the actual trip took place in March 2012. (Cathcart).

Much of what we know about the orchestra comes from the active publishing initiatives started from Pyongyang in 2010. The Uriminzokkiri.com web site, which operates from Shenyang in China (North Korea Tech), publishes in Korean, Chinese, Japanese, English, and Russian, and is the most important of the North Korean internet actors for disseminating

news, information and music to the rest of the world. In 2010, the group opened accounts in YouTube and the similar Chinese video sharing service Youku. Since its first uploaded video in YouTube in 4 July 2010, Uriminzokkiri has added over 10000 videos, many of them TV news and other TV programs, but also much music (uriminzokkiri). There are also other North Korean and pro-North Korean actors engaged in similar activities. Even though it cannot be said that the North Korean sites are conspicuously popular, they have a steady stream of visitors from all over the world, and represent a systematic effort of cultural diplomacy. They are also an excellent research resource for scholars whose exposure to live performances of North Korean music tends to be limited to rare touring ensembles, most of them in China, and the small song-and-dance ensembles that perform in evenings in many North Korean restaurants abroad. There are obvious limitations to watching a concert via the camera angles and choices of North Korean engineers, but much can be learned from the repertoire, choice of soloists, emphasis and structure of the repertoire, etc.

The Unhasu Orchestra was a medium sized orchestra and choir using mostly Western classical music instruments, but including also traditional Korean instruments. It typically had about 50 musicians, a similar size choir, and about 20 soloist singers on stage at various times in one concert. It typically performed only at stage; all of its recordings are from stage performances. The role of the Unhasu Orchestra was to perform on national holidays and anniversaries, such as the New Year, May Day, Mothers' Day, anniversary of the end of the Korean War in July 27. The orchestra held a very high place in public regard. The scores of university graduates from Pyongyang working in North Korean restaurants around Asia, pouring coffee and plunking guitars in search of foreign currency, very much looked up to the Unhasu Orchestra with a kind of awe – there had been no higher position for the entertaining elite.

Moreover, Unhasu Orchestra concerts were social events, where the cream of the North Korean musical life performed to chosen representatives of nationally important organizations under the eyes of the national leader, leading party and state officials, and foreign diplomatic representatives. The names of highest officials attending were always listed in news of the concerts. They were high concentrations of rank, honor, and artistic skill, enveloped in beautiful melodies. As long as Kim Jong-il was alive, he attended nearly all Unhasu Orchestra concerts, excepting consecutive performances of the same concert, which were meant for the enjoyment of lower level cadres. This attests to the importance that he placed on the orchestra as an expression of Pyongyang high culture. In July 2011 he bestowed to altogether 95 members (i.e., practically all members of the orchestra) various honorary titles, medals, his own books, and wrist watches, declaring that the orchestra represented the musical style of the new century (Korean Central News Agency). In the North Korean calendar, which starts counting the current era from the birth of Kim Il Sung, the year 2011 was 100. A new century had thus started, and in the field of musical art, Unhasu Orchestra was its embodiment.

It would be interesting to know whether also Kim Jong-un attended the concerts from their start, because he and Unhasu Orchestra entered publicity at the same time. We cannot, however, know this, because as long as he held officially only middle level administrative posts, the Korean Central News Agency did not list his name. Like in the film *Wish*, also in Unhasu Orchestra concert videos the presence of Kim Jong-il and those around him could only be surmised; the camera never showed him or the rest of the audience. Photos and videos of him could occasionally be seen on the screen, but even then he was shown only in his youth, or middle aged prime, never in his contemporary condition. Only after Kim Jong-un had been elevated to vice-chairman of the Central Military Commission of the Workers' Party of Korea in autumn 2010, his name started to appear in the venerable list, from the 6

October 2010 concert onwards (Korean Central News Agency). Thereafter he always can be seen to have attended.

The post- Kim Jong Il era

After the death of Kim Jong-il Unhasu Orchestra was the central ensemble for organizing memorial concerts. The first one took place already in 1 January 2012, followed by a series of daily concerts during 5-11 January. The state needed endorphin enhanced psychological handling of the death of the leader, and UO rose professionally to the occasion. It gave melodic and deeply emotional performances day after day, until some 12 000 people had heard them in the concert hall, and many more in TV. In the 17 February 2012 concert, reverently held for celebrating Kim Jong-il's 70th birthday, extraordinary posthumous aesthetics for the deceased father were created. On the stage was built a replica of Jong Il Peak, a mountain peak named after him in the holy Paektu Mountain on the Chinese border in the north. A large screen below it displayed photos and videos of him, as well as pictures of kimjongilia, a large red hybrid begonia bred specifically for him. Both kimjongilia and the Jong Il Peak became subsequently specific symbolic references to him in state functions, and in concerts of different ensembles they were always accompanied by songs for his honor. He was also given the titles of the Eternal General Secretary of the Worker's Party of Korea and the Eternal Chairman of the National Defense Commission, just like his father is the Eternal President of the Republic. In North Korea a leader of the Kim dynasty may die physically, but in terms of official functions he remains on duty eternally – which attests to the relative lack of meaning that the highest state, party and military posts have. As Rudiger Frank argues, North Korean leadership should be understood as a network of aristocratic families, descendants of people who fought with Kim Il-song and established themselves in all positions of influence with Soviet help after liberation in 1945. The Kim family is simply the

highest among its peers, and power is negotiated among the families (Frank, North Korea after Kim Jong Il: The Kim Jong Un era and its challenges).

However, the new leader had plans of his own, also on the musical sphere. During spring 2012 he created his own musical ensemble, called the Moranbong Band (Cho). It gave its first performance in July 2012. Only a year after his father had named Unhasu Orchestra the musical symbol of the new century, Kim Jong-un now declared instead the Moranbong Band to be the ensemble which best represents the century (Korean Central News Agency). The year 101 could be understood as the beginning of the century as well as the previous year. After that Kim Jong-un was seldom seen in Unhasu Orchestra concerts. Instead, he appeared always in Moranbong Band concerts, signaling that it had become the new highest musical ensemble in Pyongyang, nearest to the leader. It is an all-female band, with an even more popular style than what Unhasu Orchestra had, playing North Korean political and military songs with a pop music beat and instrumentation (Korhonen). The size of Unhasu Orchestra was trimmed down; it usually had to perform without its choir, and the number of musicians started slowly to dwindle. With the disappearance of 50-60 people it thus lost half of its size, and also the number of visiting guest singers diminished. It may be that in a situation of scarcity part of the funding for Unhasu Orchestra was simply diverted to the Moranbong Band.

On the other hand, during the first one and half years of the Kim Jong-un period the musical life in Pyongyang was rich and happy. There was an air of change and creativity. New songs were written, and there was experimentation with new musical styles. Both Unhasu Orchestra and the Moranbong Band gave frequently performances, so that there was something for music lovers to enjoy, at least for those that had access to the events. It could be observed that the concert repertoires of both top ensembles began to resemble each other somewhat, the lighter Moranbong Band style being contagious. They played many of the same popular

songs. This can be seen especially clearly in concerts in 27 July 2013. Both orchestras gave a concert on the same evening on the same theme, the 60th anniversary of the ending of the Korean War. Roughly half of the songs were the same, the only difference being with the operatic and pop styles with which they were performed. This could of course be interpreted as competition between the ensembles, but perhaps the situation should be seen from the perspective of North Korean cultural bureaucracy. It is questionable how separate the ensembles in the final analysis were. They were part of the same cultural administrative branch, as well as part of the same closely-knit cultural elite. We do not know who actually planned the repertoires of these orchestras, but it simply may have been the same persons, who fancied the same songs. Kim Jong-un attended only the Moranbong Band concert, but also the Unhasu Orchestra ended its concert by celebrating the young leader. It had also got its choir back for the occasion.

The Pyongyang music scene seemed to be rather jovial, when the atmosphere abruptly changed at the end of August 2013. The South Korean newspaper *Chosun Ilbo* (Chosun Ilbo) started a rumour about the execution of a dozen musicians related with the Wangjaesan Light Music Band and Unhasu Orchestra. The news spread rapidly to other media around the world (Ishimaru), with the number of possibly dead varying widely, and also other ensembles, such as the Moranbong Band, drawn into the gossiping. Most media attention focused on the possible execution of former Pochonbo Electronic Ensemble singer Hyon Song-wol, who was rumoured to be a former girlfriend of Kim Jong-un. None of these rumours was ever confirmed.

(Ishimaru). These were followed by the execution of Jang Song-taek and purges of people connected with him throughout the autumn 2013; the narrative with which we started this article was related to that.

It is impossible to know what happened, but at least Hyon Song-wol appeared in North Korean television in spring 2014, perfectly alive, and also other supposedly dead musicians and singers have been spotted alive in other ensembles or their audiences. However, at least something happened, because Unhasu Orchestra has not performed a single concert after that, while activities of the Moranbong Band were heavily curtailed until spring 2014, and even after that the band's performances have not been particularly uplifting. A cold wind fell on the Pyongyang musical scene in late summer 2013, and even by spring 2016 the atmosphere has not warmed up to the earlier level.

Much of the musical legacy of Kim Jong-il was wiped off by the disappearance of the ensembles created by him, and even the Huichon Dam is not yet working properly. Also the early Kim Jong-un period aesthetics look rather withered by now. The situation seems to accord with some of the writings of philosopher Hannah Arendt, who analyses the fallibility of human action in social situations in her study of the human condition. People initiate things, starting something that moves also other people into action, and innovations are thus created. However, as new people take hold of the action, the original initiator, however autocratic he or she then is, eventually looses control of the process, even if he or she stays alive. Even people who are loyal give their own shape to the action, changing it, while people who are not loyal or competent twist it even further (Arendt 177-198). The film *Wish* is a fine example of this pattern, and also increasingly appears as a perfect artistic depiction of the Pyongyang cultural scene: A tremendous amount of work has been done, but the utopia has not arrived, and life continues to be lived in silent sorrow. Yet, the wish is still there. Meanwhile, after all the purges and rumors, the cultural productions of the late Kim Jong-il and early Kim Jong-un eras are still there in YouTube, for connoisseurs to enjoy.

Works Cited

Arendt, Hannah. *The Human Condition*. Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press, 1958.

Beck, Ulrich. *Die Erfindung des Politischen*. Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp, 1993.

Brann, Eva. *The Music of the Republic. Essays on Socrates' Conversations and Plato's Writings*. Philadelphia, n.d.

Buzo, Adrian. *The Guerilla Dynasty: Politics and Leadership in North Korea*. Boulder: Westview Press, 2009.

Cathcart, Adam and Steven Denney. "North Korea's Cultural Diplomacy in the Early Kim Jong-un Era." *North Korean Review* n.d.: 29–42.

Cho, Un-chol. "Moranbon rakudan wa Chōsen sutairu no yuniiku atarashii keiongakudan." *Ritsumeikan Journal of Korean Studies* 2014: 173-182.

Chosun Ilbo. "Kim Jong-un's Ex-Girlfriend 'Shot by Firing Squad'." 29 August 2013. *english.chosun.com.* 10 February 2016. <http://english.chosun.com/site/data/html_dir/2013/08/29/2013082901412.html>.

Confucius. *The Analects of Confucius*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997.

Eliade, Mircea. *Cosmos and History. The Myth of the Eternal Return*. New York and London: Garland, 1985.

Frank, Rudiger. "North Korea after Kim Jong Il: The Kim Jong Un era and its challenges." 2012. *Asia-Pacific Journal.* 10 March 2015. <http://www.japanfocus.org/-Ruediger-Frank/3674>.

—. "North Korea after Kim Jong Il: The Risks of Improvisation." 12 January 2012. *38 North.* 10 February 2016. <http://38north.org/2012/01/rfrank011112/>.

Guttenfelder, David. "Associated Press photograph." *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* 15 December 2014: 5.

Haggard, Stephan and Noland, Marcus. "The Winter of Their Discontent: Pyongyang Attacks the Market." 10 January 2010. *Peterson Institute for International Economics.* 10 February 2016. <http://www.iie.com/publications/pb/pb10-01.pdf>.

Harrison, Henrietta. *China: Inventing the Nation*. London: Arnold, 2001.

Ishimaru, Jiro. "The Firing Squad Executions of North Korean Entertainers - North Korean State's Crackdown on "Political Videos"." 17 November 2013. *Rimjin-gang.* 09 February 2016. <http://www.asiapress.org/rimjingang/english/report/2013-11-17/>.

Jang, Jin-sung. *Dear Leader*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2014.

Korea Herald. "Succession groundwork underway in N. Korea." 30 March 2010. *Korea Herald.* 10 February 2016. <http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20091029000034>.

Korean Central News Agency. "Commendations Awarded Artistes and Officials of Unhasu Orchestra." 27 July 2011. *Korean Central News Agency.* 10 March 2015. <http://www.kcna.co.jp/item/2011/201107/news27/20110727-30ee.html>.

—. "Kim Jong Il Enjoys "October Concert.”." 06 October 2010. *Korean Central News Agency.* 10 March 2015. <http://www.kcna.co.jp/item/2010/201010/news06/20101006-21ee.html>.

—. "Kim Jong Un Appreciates Demonstration Performance of Newly Organized Moranbong Band." 07 July 2012. *Korean Central News Agency.* 10 March 2015. <http://www.kcna.co.jp/item/2012/201207/news07/20120707-09ee.html >.

—. "Medical Analysis of Kim Jong Il's Demise." 19 December 2011. *Korean Central News Agency.* 10 March 2015. <http://www.kcna.co.jp/item/2011/201112/news19/20111219-03ee.html >.

—. "Rodong Sinmun Calls for Combating Imperialists' Ideological and Cultural Poisoning." 13 August 2012. 10 March 2015. <http://www.kcna.co.jp/item/2012/201208/news13/20120813-08ee.html>.

Korhonen, Pekka. "Rock Gospels: Analyzing the Artistic Style of Moranbong Band." 04 March 2014. *Sino-NK.* 10 February 2016. <http://sinonk.com/2014/03/04/rock-gospels-analyzing-the-artistic-style-of-moranbong-band/>.

koryogroup. "WISH - DPRK (North Korea) Film Trailer." 3 March 2013. *YouTube.* 10 February 2016. <https://youtu.be/INC0RtJvNe8>.

La Corée du Nord de A à Z. "Une chanson en l’honneur de l’héritier de Kim Jong-il? ." 26 October 2009. 10 February 2016. <http://world.kbs.co.kr/french/event/nkorea_nuclear/news_01_detail.htm?No=10935>.

Low, Kim Cheng Patrick. "Teaching and Education: the ways of Confucius." *Educational Research* 2010: 681-686.

North Korea Tech. "Uriminzokkiri." 07 December 2010. *northkoreatech.org.* 10 February 2016. <http://www.northkoreatech.org/the-north-korean-website-list/uriminzokkiri/>.

North Korean Economy Watch. "DPRK declares Huichon Power Stations operational." 06 April 2012. *nkeconwatch.com.* 10 February 2016. <http://www.nkeconwatch.com/2012/04/06/dprk-declares-huichon-power-stations-operational/>.

Pinker, Steven. *The Better Angels of Our Nature: Why Violence has Declined*. Kindle edition. London and New York: Viking/Penguin Books, 2011.

Plato. *The Republic*. New York: Basic Books, 1991.

Ryall, Julian. "Fears over North Korean dam that 'killed' Kim Jong-il." 05 June 2013. *The Telegraph.* 10 February 2016. < http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/northkorea/10099875/Fears-over-North-Korean-dam-that-killed-Kim-Jong-il.html>.

Sondermann, Klaus. *O Deutschland! Oi Suomi! Vielgeliebtes Österreich!: zur politischen und gesellschaftlichen Karriere vorgestellter Wesen*. Tampere: Universität Tampere, Forschungsinstitut für Sozialwissenschaften, 1995.

Stimmekoreas. "North Koreans on Jang Song Thaek: "Send us Jang and we'll throw him into the Sea!"." 12 December 2013. *Stimmekoreas.com.* 10 February 2016. <https://youtu.be/zIbhfF10eug>.

Tarr, Bronwyn, Jacques Launay and Robin I. M. Dunbar. "Music and social bonding: "self-other" merging and neurohormonal mechanisms." 2014. *Frontiers in Psychology.* <http://journal.frontiersin.org/article/10.3389/fpsyg.2014.01096/abstract>.

uriminzokkiri. "uriminzokkiri." 14 July 2010. *YouTube.* 10 February 2016. <https://www.youtube.com/user/uriminzokkiri>.

Wong, Marina. "A Comparison between the Philosophies of Confucious and Plato as Applied to Music Education." *Journal of Aesthetic Education* 1998: 109-112.

Yurchak, Aleksei. *Everything Was Forever, Until It Was No More. The Last Soviet Generation*. Kindle edition. Princeton and Woodstock: Princeton University Press, 2005.

Concert and song videos

Moranbong Band.

July 27, 2013. The 60th anniversary of the victory in the great Fatherland Liberation War. http://youtu.be/MeL8ra_kmVk

State Merited Chorus

December 25, 2010. Footsteps. http://youtu.be/rA1LFD6xfi4

January 26, 2014. DPRK song - We know nobody but you! http://youtu.be/skJgiVejN5M

Unhasu Orchestra

October 6, 2010. "October concert" on the occasion of the 65th birthday of the WPK. http://youtu.be/q6TjQt8dKkk

January 01, 2012. New Year's concert "The Cause of the Sun Will Be Immortal". The whole concert was never published, only a 5-minute news reel. http://youtu.be/yXl-Sn4dqQE

January 5-11, 2012. New Year's Concert. http://youtu.be/5TL9wGiJPrQ

February 17, 2012. The 70th Birth Anniversary of Kim Jong Il, "The Hearts Following the Sun." http://youtu.be/0d5dvhHPVGk

July 27, 2013. The 60th anniversary of the victory in the Fatherland Liberation War. http://youtu.be/PZEYURAkQmA