



Smithsonian Folkways

The Soul of Korean Arirang **Music from Korea in the Middle School Band** Designed by: Vince Fejeran

Summary:

This lesson is designed to enhance the music of John Ployhar's well-known "Korean Folksong Medley" for Concert Band, and should be used as an introduction to Korean folk music *before* the band arrangement is handed out to students. Within the song "Korean Folksong Medley" there are three Korean Folk songs: "Beteul Norae," "Odoldogi," and "Arirang." In this unit the middle school band students will explore the folk song "Arirang". Through cultural enrichment, attentive and engaging listening, creating, improvising and performing, students will gain a better understanding of Korean folksong in relation to its history and culture.

Suggested Grade Levels: 6-8 Middle School Band

Country: Korea

Region: North and South Korea

Culture Group: Korean

Genre: Folksong, instrumental band arrangement

Instruments: Ggwaeng-gwari (Small Gong), Jing (Large Gong), Janggu (Hour glass shaped drum), Buk (Wood frame drum), Tanso (Vertical flute), Taegeum (Long horizontal Flute), guitar

Language: Korean

Co-Curricular Areas: Social Studies, Geography

National Standards: (1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 9)

Prerequisites: Students should have had at least one year of basic instrumental music training. They need a basic understanding of rhythmic notation and understanding of major scale construction. It would also be helpful to prepare a geography or social studies lesson on Korea in advance of this curricular unit in order to introduce students to important facts and information about Korea. This would also be an appropriate time to discuss the cultural elements and traditions of Korea.

Objectives

Students will

- Listen to, analyze and describe Korean folksong selection
- Identify and construct a pentatonic scale
- Transpose a pentatonic melody for their own instrument
- Improvise using the pentatonic scale

- Identify and perform the folk song “Arirang” in the context of an existing Concert Band composition.

Materials:

1. Recording of “Ah-Rirang,” from *Korea Vocal and Instrumental Music* collected by Paul M. Ochojski, Ph. D. <http://www.folkways.si.edu/korea-vocal-and-instrumental-music/world/album/smithsonian>
2. Recording of “Arirang,” from *World Tour with Folk Songs* collected by Stephen Addiss and Bill Crofut <http://www.folkways.si.edu/stephen-addiss-and-bill-crofut/world-tour-with-folk-songs/american-folk/music/album/smithsonian>
3. Band instruments
4. Map of South Korea <http://geology.com/world/south-korea-satellite-image.shtml>
5. Video on Korean Music <http://s.si.edu/videos-korea>

Lesson Segments:

1. **The Famous Korean Folksong** (National Standards #6, #9)
2. **How Can I Play “Arirang” On My Instrument?** (National Standards #1, #2)
3. **Improvising With Just Five Notes** (National Standards #3)
4. **So That’s Where That Song Comes From!** (National Standards #5, #7)

1. The Famous Korean Folksong

- a. Play two different recordings of “Arirang.” Listen to each recording two or three times.

- i. Introduce each song with a guiding question such as:

1. What instruments or voices do you hear? (Possible answers: drums, someone singing, something metal)
2. What meter do you think the song is? (3/4, 4/4, 6/8 meter)
3. Is it fast or slow? (Possible answers: Slower than the music I listen to this morning, faster than our warm-up scales)
4. What are some of the differences between these versions? (Possible answers: One sound more traditional Korean, one has a guitar and sounds more like American Folk music)

- b. After listening, build back round schema:

- i. Find Korea on the map
- ii. Compare popularity of “Arirang” to folksongs in students’ everyday lives
- iii. Discuss the variations of context, inflection, and rhythm resulting in many versions of “Arirang “

Extension (Optional):

- a. Ask students to identify culturally relevant folksongs from their lives, which may have different variations.

- b. Listen to a recording of “Variations on a Korean Folk Song” John Barnes Chance
- c. “Arirang has many translations, research and discuss the different meanings and how that might change the way this song is heard

Assessment: Students will participate in active and engaging listening and discussion.

ARIRANG

Folksong of South Korea

The image shows two staves of musical notation for the song "Arirang". The top staff is labeled "Soprano" and the bottom staff is labeled "s.". Both staves are in 3/4 time and B-flat major. The melody consists of 16 measures. The first 8 measures (A section) and the last 8 measures (B section) are identical. The melody is: Bb4, A4, G4, F4, E4, D4, C4, Bb3, A3, G3, F3, E3, D3, C3, Bb2, A2. There is a triplet of eighth notes (Bb4, A4, G4) in measure 3. The piece ends with a double bar line.

2. How can I play “Arirang” on my instrument?

a. Rhythmic Development

- i. Students will listen to the recording of “Arirang” closest to the version used in the band arrangement they will be playing and performing
- ii. Students will identify the A section (meas. 1-8) and B section (meas. 9-16) of the song
- iii. Students will sing the A melody with the recording (without words)
- iv. Students will sing the A melody independently
- v. Students will sing the B melody with the recording (without words)
- vi. Students will sing the B melody independently
- vii. Students will sing A and B melody

b. Building a Pentatonic Scale

- i. Students will play the concert Bb scale in unison, as conducted
- ii. Explain that the a pentatonic scale leaves out the 4th and 7th degrees of the major scale; play the concert Bb scale in unison as conducted, omitting the 4th and 7th notes
- iii. Allow students time to play scale on their own to build fluency

c. Playing the Melody

- i. Find the first note of the melody; students may need help in determining it is the fifth note of their concert Bb scale
- ii. Sing the A melody in unison

- iii. Give students time to independently figure out the melody on their instruments after they have the correct starting note
- iv. Play melody together (for students having difficulty figuring out the melody, they can be assigned a part to play a sustained open 5th using 'F' and 'Bb' to accompany the melody; continuation of learning the melody would be assigned as "at-home" practice and reviewed in the next lesson)

Extension:

- a. Repeat process to learn the B section
- b. Divide students into sections and play as a round staggering by one measure.

Assessment: Students will be able to play the A melody with rhythmic and melodic accuracy independently.

3. Improving with Just Five Notes

a. Echo

- i. Teacher will lead 3 beat echo patterns beginning with the first note of the pentatonic scale, gradually increasing melodic and rhythmic complexity
- ii. Students will lead 3 beat echo patterns

b. Establish Background

- i. The first and fifth notes ("open fifths") will be used to create a rhythmic accompaniment
- ii. Teacher will demonstrate improvising a melody over the accompaniment
- iii. Student will be selected to improvise a two-measure call and response with the teacher
(As students become more comfortable, then longer phrases should be encouraged)
- iv. Student will improvise a four-measure improvisation over rhythmic accompaniment

Extension (Optional):

- a. Students can create new accompaniment patterns
- b. Improvisation can be expanded to include the B melody with new rhythmic accompaniment
- c. Form may be expanded to: AB improvisation AB improvisation
- d. Seek out jazz samples that demonstrate improvisation
(ex. "A Dee Dong Blues", Oscar Pettiford)

Assessment: All students will be able to improvise for 4 measures using the correct notes of the Bb pentatonic scale within the proper meter.

4. So That's Where the Song Comes From!

- a.** Students will sight read “Korean Folk Song Medley” by James Ployhar
- b.** Students will rehearse using traditional concert band rehearsal format and techniques
- c.** Students will be asked to identify the three Korean folk songs.
- d.** Students will identify which sections are playing the “Arirang” melody

Assessment: All students will be able to:

- a. Identify three Korean folk song melodies
- b. Identify which section is playing the melody of “Arirang”
- c. Perform the “Korean Folk Song Medley” in a formal concert.