



Teaching Music through Performance in Band

VOLUME 9

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Teacher Resource Guide

Arirang and Akatonbo

Kōsaku Yamada

(1886-1965)

arranged by Chang Su Koh

(b. 1970)

Publisher	Brain Music
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Duration	05:20

Unit 1: Composer

“Arirang” is a Korean folk song that, in the typical folk song tradition, has been passed down over many generations, making it difficult to determine the exact time and place of its origin. There are two pervasive views among scholars on the development of the “Arirang” folk song. One theory is that the song originated during the Silla dynasty, which spanned 57 BC to 935 AD. The other theory is that “Arirang” originated in conjunction with the reconstruction of the Gyeongbokgung Palace during the regency of Daewongun sometime before the completion of that project in 1867.

Kōsaku Yamada was born in Tokyo, Japan, on June 9, 1886. He attended the Tokyo Music School from 1904–1908, where he studied vocal music with Tamaki Shibata (or Miura) and cello and music history with Heinrich Werkmeister. In 1910, he moved to Berlin and studied composition at the Hochschule für Musik with Max Bruch and Leopold Carl Wolff. Yamada was a prolific composer with over 1,600 works, which included symphonic tone poems, operas, and many other genres. Many of his works were destroyed in a 1945 air raid on Tokyo during World War II. Yamada is primarily known for laying the foundation of the European music tradition in Japan and also for his songs, including “Akatonbo.” He passed away in Tokyo, Japan, on December 29, 1965.

Chang Su Koh was born in Osaka, Japan, in 1970. He received his degree in music composition from the Osaka College of Music and has completed additional studies in composition at the Musik Akademie der Stadt Basel, Switzerland. His composition teachers include Kunihiro Tanaka and Rudolf Kelterborn. Awards Koh has received include the Twelfth Asahi Composition Prize, the Master Yves Leleu Prize from the First Comines-Warneton International Composition Contest, second prize from the Fifth Suita Music Contest composition section, and honorable mentions from the Thirteenth Nagoya City Cultural Promotion Contest and the First Zoltán Kodály Memorial International Composers Competition. Presently, Koh teaches at Osaka College of Music and ESA Conservatory of Music and Wind Repair Academy, and is a member of the Kansai Modern Music Association.

Unit 2: Composition

Chung Shin Yun, director of the Higashiosaka Korean Junior High School Band, commissioned *Arirang and Akatonbo* (2003) to commemorate the twentieth anniversary of the band's membership in the Osaka Prefecture All Japan Band Association. The title of the work reflects the names of the two songs used as the melodic material throughout this arrangement. "Arirang" is a well-known Korean folk song and "Akatonbo" ("red dragonfly") is a popular Japanese nursery song. The use of folk music in this arrangement necessitates a romantic interpretation of the work for an authentic performance. While this work is not composed in a traditional theme and variations form, both melodies are presented numerous times with varied accompaniment, tempo, instrumentation, and articulation. *Arirang and Akatonbo* is a one-movement arrangement of moderate difficulty, but it will require strong players throughout each section, especially in the upper woodwind parts. The performance time for *Arirang and Akatonbo* is approximately five minutes and twenty seconds.

Unit 3: Historical Perspective

"Arirang" is a Korean folk song with many variations, typically prefixed by the particular version's place of origin. Similarities of the different versions include sorrowful melodies with lyrics that reference the Arirang Pass. While there are real passes in Korea and Japan that bear the name Arirang, the use of Arirang in the different folk song versions is a metaphor. Chung-myun states, "The pass is an intersection of apprehension and hope on the road to enter the unknown world. Korean traditional society regarded a pass as a boundary to each village. So, the pass worked as interchange among villages. And crossing the pass means 'farewell.'"¹ The Arirang used in this composition is from the Gyeonggi-do Province, which includes the city of Seoul, so this particular version will occasionally carry the name "Seoul Arirang" as well as

another popular name, “Bonjo Arirang.” This particular version of “Arirang” was used as the official song for the unified Korean sports teams in the 1990 Olympics. Since the Gyeonggi region was completely in South Korea, both nations agreed to drop the province prefix and simply refer to this version as “Arirang,” which is the name most foreigners had adopted for this particular version already. “Akatonbo,” subtitled “red dragonfly,” is a popular Japanese nursery song with lyrics from a poem written by Miki Rofu (1889–1964). The poem first appeared in the nursery songbook *Shinujima* (Pearl Island) in 1921. The poem refers to Rofu’s memories of his hometown Hyogo Prefecture. Yamada set Rofu’s poem to music in 1927.

Arirang and Akatonbo uses both Korean and Japanese folk songs in a way that illustrates previous tensions between the two cultures. At the conclusion of *Arirang and Akatonbo*, the composer makes use of both songs simultaneously in a quiet setting to illustrate a peaceful coexistence. The composer elaborates, “This work should serve as a bridge not only between Japanese society and Koreans living in Japan but also between Japan and the Korean Peninsula.”

Unit 4: Technical Considerations

Arirang and Akatonbo makes use of only two key signatures (concert E-flat major and concert F major). While these are the only two key signatures used, there are six distinct tonal centers (E-flat, F, D-flat, C, A, B-flat) represented throughout the work. Both the “Arirang” and “Akatonbo” themes are constructed using the pentatonic scale (first, second, third, fifth, and sixth scale degrees of a major scale). The predominant time signature is 3/4 with the exception of a six-measure section where the meter shifts to 3/2. The change of meters helps facilitate the augmentation of the melodic line. The quarter note remains constant as the meter changes to 3/2 and back again to 3/4. The tempo ranges from quarter note = 64 beats per minute to quarter note = 142 beats per minute. Rhythmically, the performers should be prepared to execute a dotted-quarter and three eighth-note rhythm; dotted-quarter and eighth-note rhythm; syncopated eighth, quarter, eighth rhythm; dotted-eighth sixteenth rhythm followed by a syncopated eighth, quarter, eighth rhythm; four sixteenth-note rhythm; and a quintuple sixteenth-note rhythm.

There are many performance challenges that should be anticipated when programming *Arirang and Akatonbo*. Proper phrasing of the “Arirang” theme requires the development of air support that can allow a performer to sustain a phrase for eight measures in 3/4 time at a tempo of quarter note = 64 beats per minute. Proper phrasing is still attainable if performers are unable to sustain a phrase of this length by making use of staggered breathing techniques. Another performance consideration is instrument ranges. While range demands are moderate throughout most of *Arirang and Akatonbo*, it should be noted that performers must be able to extend their range to the following written pitches:

flute to b-flat², clarinet to d², alto saxophone to f², tenor saxophone to f², baritone saxophone from c to c-sharp², trumpet to b¹, French horn to a-flat¹, euphonium to b-flat, and tuba down to E-flat².

When programming *Arirang and Akatonbo*, it is also important to consider the many different solo instruments required for an authentic performance. Instruments with solos include piccolo, flute, oboe, E-flat clarinet, B-flat soprano clarinet, and alto saxophone. It should be noted that there are no cues written for the E-flat clarinet solo. In addition, there is an important accompaniment part written for bass clarinet and string bass. If neither instrument is available, a single tuba player could cover this important accompaniment part. Occasionally, unison scoring in the upper register of flute, clarinet, and alto saxophone could present a performance challenge for students playing the second and third parts, as well as cause ensemble balance issues. If the overall sound of the ensemble becomes too bright with this scoring, the second and third parts could be dropped an octave to remedy the situation.

Unit 5: Stylistic Considerations

Arirang and Akatonbo takes its melodic material from folk songs, so a romantic interpretation will produce the most authentic performance. Rubato may be used at slower tempos, but a steady tempo should be maintained for faster tempos. Articulations are clearly marked and should be strictly followed. Staccatos must be played lifted, with slight emphasis. Syncopated rhythms as well as articulated consecutive eighth-note rhythms must be played light and separated, even in the absence of staccato markings. Accented notes should be spaced but played full value. Performers should take great care not to let accented passages become too heavy. The opening mood of *Arirang and Akatonbo* should be somber. The transition to a faster tempo should allow a livelier mood to be presented. Happiness is replaced by a feeling of tension during transition and development sections. The composition closes with a return to a slower tempo, with both themes presented at the same time. The composer intends for this section to represent a peaceful coexistence between the two themes representing the Korean and Japanese cultures.

Unit 6: Musical Elements

MELODY:

Melodic lines for this composition come from Korean and Japanese folk songs that are constructed using the pentatonic scale. Performers can prepare to play each pentatonic scale by learning the corresponding major scale first and then practicing that scale by omitting the fourth and seventh scale degrees. Only two key signatures are used in *Arirang and Akatonbo*, but six distinct melodic line tonal centers are present: E-flat, F, D-flat, C, A, B-flat. This creates a



number of instances where accidentals are needed to construct the melody in the correct pentatonic scale.

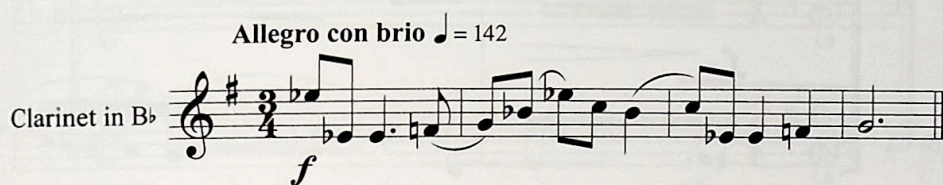


FIGURE 1. "AKATONBO" THEME, CONCERT D-FLAT PENTATONIC.

The use of pentatonic scales that use a tonal center other than those of the key signature along with the use of accidentals during the transitional and development sections present an additional challenge for the performers. Slow practice is advised to help students perform the correct notes in those sections.

HARMONY:

The harmony in *Arirang* and *Akatonbo* is traditional with the use of triads and seventh chords. The texture of the composition is primarily homophonic, relying on a single melodic line with accompanying chords. In general, the harmonic accompaniment parts are structured in block chords using a repeated rhythmic pattern. Occasionally, seventh chords are written in third inversion, creating exposed dissonances.



FIGURE 2. HARMONIC ACCOMPANIMENT DISSONANCES.

RHYTHM:

The beginning of the composition begins in 3/4 time, with the quarter note getting the beat. There are occasions where question-and-answer passages require performers to be independent counters.

Allegretto con brio ♩ = 142

Fl.

B♭ Cl.

Fl.

B♭ Cl.

FIGURE 3. INDEPENDENT COUNTING EXAMPLE.

In those instances, each rhythmic part should be worked separately before combining the two parts. Use of a metronome is encouraged so the performers will maintain a steady tempo. There is also a shift to 3/2 to facilitate an augmentation of the melodic line. The quarter note remains constant through this meter change. Two measures before the meter change, students should start to count each quarter note as “one – te, two – te, three – te” in preparation for a smooth transition to the new meter.

Allegretto con brio ♩ = 142

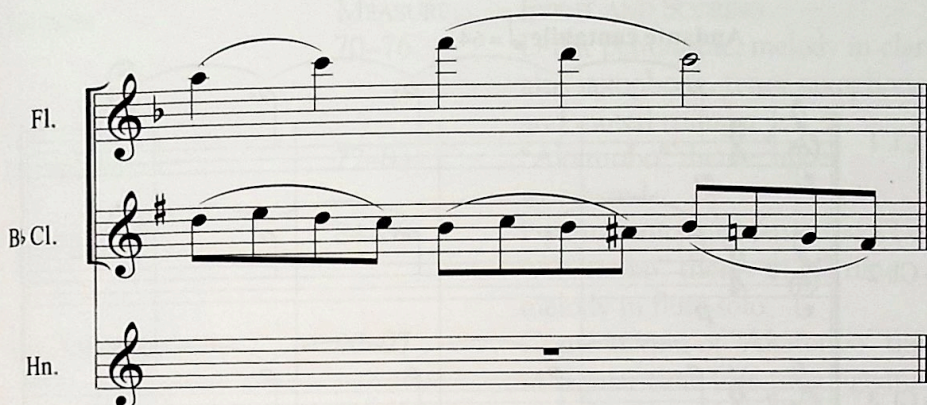
Fl.

B♭ Cl.

Hn.

1 te 2 te 3 te

FIGURE 4. METER CHANGE EXAMPLE.



Fl.

B♭ Cl.

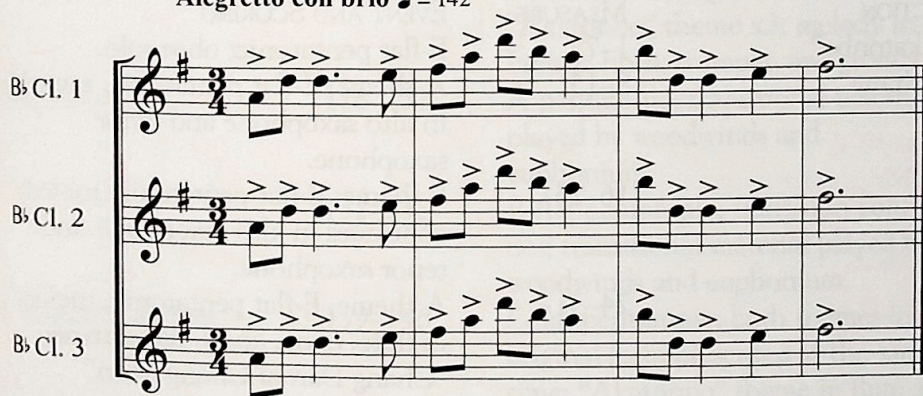
Hn.

FIGURE 4 CONTINUED.

TIMBRE:

Since *Arirang* and *Akatonbo* is an arrangement of two short folk tunes, there are a number of instrument combinations and registers used to provide variety with the repeated use of those songs. One unusual scoring approach in this composition makes use of unison writing for multiple instruments in their upper register, creating a very “bright” sound.

Alegretto con brio ♩ = 142



B♭ Cl. 1

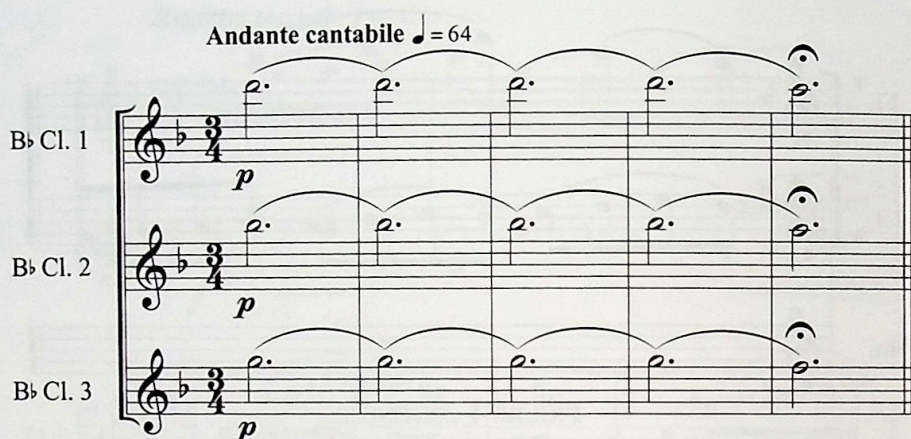
B♭ Cl. 2

B♭ Cl. 3

FIGURE 5. UNISON SCORING EXAMPLE.

As mentioned earlier, if the scoring of those particular sections becomes too prominent, the second and third parts could play down an octave, or the number of performers could be reduced. Be aware of intonation issues that might emerge due to these instruments being scored in their upper register at softer dynamic levels.

Andante cantabile ♩ = 64



B♭ Cl. 1 *p*

B♭ Cl. 2 *p*

B♭ Cl. 3 *p*

FIGURE 6. UPPER REGISTER SCORING EXAMPLE.

To prepare students for this challenge, time should be spent practicing upper register notes at soft to very soft dynamic levels, taking care to maintain a consistent pitch center.

Unit 7: Form and Structure

SECTION	MEASURE	EVENT AND SCORING
"Akatonbo"	1–7	E-flat pentatonic; oboe solo.
"Arirang"	8–15	A theme; E-flat pentatonic; melody in alto saxophone and tenor saxophone.
	16–23	B theme; E-flat pentatonic; melody continues in alto saxophone and tenor saxophone.
	24–31	A theme; E-flat pentatonic; melody in flute, oboe, and E-flat clarinet; "Chang Dan of Chung Mori" rhythmic pattern in accompaniment.
	32–39	B theme; E-flat pentatonic; melody continues in flute, oboe, and E-flat clarinet; "Chang Dan of Chung Mori" rhythmic pattern continues.
Transition	40–42	Phrase extension/transitional material; based on "Arirang" theme.
Bridge	43–59	Based on "Arirang" theme; clarinet, alto saxophone, tenor saxophone.
"Akatonbo"	60–69	F pentatonic; melody in flute, oboe, and E-flat clarinet.



SECTION	MEASURE	EVENT AND SCORING
	70–76	D-flat pentatonic; melody in clarinet, alto saxophone, tenor saxophone, and muted trumpet 1.
Development	77–83	“Akatonbo” theme; upper woodwinds.
“Akatonbo”	84–89	F pentatonic; augmentation x2 of “Akatonbo” theme in 3/2 time; melody in flute solo.
Development	90–97	Continuation of “Akatonbo” theme in regular time (3/4 time signature) mm. 91–92; melody in French horns; development in upper woodwinds and low brass.
“Akatonbo”	98–103	C pentatonic; melody in clarinet.
Transition	104–115	Transitional material based on both “Arirang” and “Akatonbo” themes in four-measure groupings based on key; C, A, and F pentatonic (in that order) are utilized.
“Akatonbo”	116–127	F pentatonic; augmentation of “Akatonbo” theme x3; melody in French horn, trumpet, and trombone.
Transition	128–131	A pentatonic; transitional material played by woodwinds and euphonium.
	132–138	B-flat pentatonic; transition continues; transitional material played by woodwinds and euphonium.
Combined themes	139–146	E-flat pentatonic; both themes in original form presented at the same time; “Akatonbo” theme in flute and “Arirang” A theme in clarinet, alto saxophone, and tenor saxophone.
	147–154	E-flat pentatonic; “Akatonbo” theme in bassoon, bass clarinet, tenor saxophone, and euphonium; “Arirang” B theme in flute, oboe, clarinet, and alto saxophone.
Coda	155–163	E-flat pentatonic; fragments of “Arirang” and “Akatonbo” themes played by piccolo, flute, oboe, E-flat clarinet, clarinet, and alto saxophone soloists to end piece.



Unit 8: Suggested Listening

John Barnes Chance: *Variations on a Korean Folk Song*. *Teaching Music through Performance in Band*, Vol. 1 – CD Resource Recordings, Grade 4, North Texas Wind Symphony, Eugene Migliaro Corporon, conductor. GIA, CD-490, 2001.

Chang Su Koh: *Arirang and Akatonbo*. *Redline Tango*, Tokyo Kosei Wind Orchestra, Ichiro Saito, conductor. EMI Music Japan, TOCF-56077, 2007.

Traditional. *Arirang*. *Songs of the Soldier*, 26 Time Honored Classics. United States Army Chorus. Altissimo 75442255872, 2007.

Kōsaku Yamada, arr. S. Wakamatsu: *Akatonbo (Red Dragonfly)*. *Rainbow Sounds*, Tapiola Choir, Kari Ala-Pöllänen, conductor. Ondine ODE884-2, 1996.

Unit 9: Additional References and Resource

Chung-myun, Lee. *Arirang: Song of Korea*. Seoul, Korea: Easy Publishing Co., 2009.

Manabe, Noriko. "Western music in Japan: The evolution of styles in children's songs, hip-hop, and other genres" (Ph.D. dissertation, The City University of New York, 2009).

Sadie, Stanley, and John Tyrell. *Yamada, Kōsaku*, Vol. 27. *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* by Masakata Kanazawa and Yo Akioka (London: Macmillan Publishers, 2001), 633, 635.

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¹Lee Chung-myun, *Arirang: Song of Korea* (Seoul, Korea: Easy Publishing Co., 2009), 57.