

Arirang (Traditional Korean)

Arranged by Hyo-Won Woo (1974)

Translation and Pronunciation

[a-ri-raŋ a-ri-raŋ a-ra-ri-jo]
Arirang, arirang, arariyo

[a-ri-raŋ go-gæ-ro nɔ-mɔ-gan-da]
Arirang gogaero neomuhganda

[na-rəl bɔ-ri-go ga-ji nən ni-mən]
Nareul beorigo gasi neun nimeun

[jim-ri-do mot-ga-sɔ bal-bjɔŋ-nan-da]
Simridoh motgaseo balbbyong nanda

[a-ri a-ri-raŋ ssə-ri ssə-ri-raŋ a-ri a-ra-ri-jo]
Ari arirang sseuri sseurirang ari arariyo

[a-ri a-ri-raŋ ssə-ri ssə-ri-raŋ a-ri a-ra-ri-jo a-ri a-ra-ri a-ra-ri na-ne]
Ari arirang ssueri sseurirang ari arariyo ari arari arari nanae

Poetic Translation

Arirang, arirang, arariyo
You are going over Arirang hill
My love, you are leaving me
Your feet will be sore before you go ten.¹

Background

Arirang is a folk song from Korea. It is included on UNESCO's Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. There are over 3,600 known variants of this song. I particularly love this statement from UNESCO in reference to the song:

While dealing with diverse universal themes, the simple musical and literary composition invites improvisation, imitation and singing in unison, encouraging its acceptance by different musical genres. Experts estimate the total number of folk songs carrying the title 'Arirang' at some 3,600 variations belonging to about sixty versions. A great virtue of Arirang is its respect for human creativity, freedom of expression and empathy. Everyone can create new lyrics, adding to the song's regional, historical and genre variations, and cultural diversity. Arirang is universally sung and enjoyed by the Korean nation. At the same time, an array of practitioners of regional versions, including local communities,

¹ Woo, Hyo-Won, arr. *Arirang*. Walton Music. 2018, 2.

private groups and individuals, actively lead efforts for its popularization and transmission, highlighting the general and local characteristics of individual versions.²

The song has been sung for many centuries, but the first known recording “was made in 1896 by American ethnologist Alice C. Fletcher.”³ “During the Japanese occupation of Korea from 1920 to 1945, “Arirang” became a resistance anthem against imperialist Japanese rule.”⁴

Recordings

Dolce Canto and Ansan City Choir, Dr. Park Shin-Hwa, conductor. 2016. <https://youtu.be/bg-Y-yUGfZQ> - I don't think you can beat this recording. This is a choir from South Korea and they are fabulous. Make sure to listen especially for diction.

Suwon City Choir, Min In Ki, conductor. Memorial to the 60th anniversary of Hanmi. <https://youtu.be/JiJSoQ1GLos>. I had the privilege of singing with this choir when they were guests of the Oregon Bach Festival.

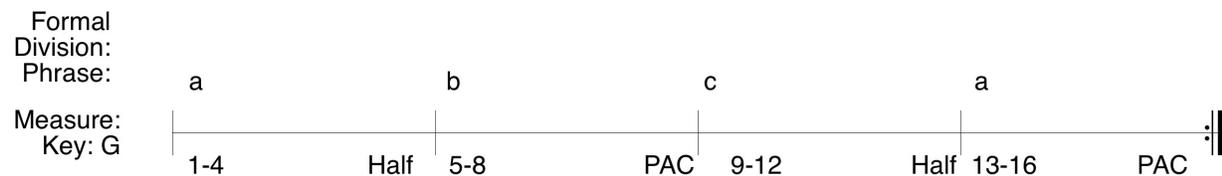
Analysis

Key: G Major

Meter: 3/4

Song form: Strophic (although frequently only one strophe is sung).

Song consists of four balanced four-measure phrases.



Melody: The melody is built on a pentatonic or 5 note scale, consisting of the pitches G A B D E

² Unknown author. “Arirang, lyrical folk song in the Republic of Korea.” *United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization – Intangible Cultural Heritage*. <https://ich.unesco.org/en/RL/arirang-lyrical-folk-song-in-the-republic-of-korea-00445> [accessed 6/22/2019].

³ Wikipedia contributors. "Arirang." *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*. Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia, 20 Jun. 2019. Web. 23 Jun. 2019.

⁴ Wikipedia contributors. "Arirang." *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*. Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia, 20 Jun. 2019. Web. 23 Jun. 2019.

Arrangement form: Theme and variations

SECTION	MEASURE	EVENT AND SCORING
Introduction	1-8	piano only; tempo (Andante @ q=80) and key (G Major) established
Melody introduced	9-25	Melody sung in unison by S/A accompanied with piano; melody is sung straight – no alterations to basic form
Interlude	26-33	piano interlude
Variation 1	34-50	34-41 Melody sung in octaves, all parts SATB; 42-50 Melody begins in T/B, moves to S at ms. 46; While harmony is distributed through the voices, for the most part this section is sung in 3-part harmony; the melody is not altered
Variation 2	51-66	Modulate to Ab Major; Melody in A/B in octaves; S/T sing harmony (but double each other); essentially two part harmony;
interlude	67-73	piano only
interlude	74-77	Percussion introduced, piano continues; new tempo – Q = 152;
Variation 3	78-93	T/B sing melody through 85, at 86 they split into harmony, with tenor taking melody; The melody is unchanged aside from tempo. S/A are predominantly in unison through ms. 85, and split into open fifths after that; they provide the drive through a highly syncopated counterpoint
Variation 4	94-109	T/B sing melody throughout, no alterations; S/A sing new countermelody, again highly syncopated
Break	110-119	This section is created from previous materials, but no melody here. The bass mainly doubles Alto 2.
Coda	120-142	120-134 – musical material from previous sources, but no melody; harmonically this is a high/low split, meaning that Tenors double Sopranos and Basses double Altos in octaves. Call and response – sometimes between piano and singers, sometimes between S/A and T/B. 135 – end – ascending canonic patterns alternating voices – B, A, S/T/B ending on a final sustained chord