

More About TRIO No. 1 (Koreana)

This is my second piece of music based on Korean folk songs. The first, **Korean Suite**, a grade 3 piece for concert band, can be seen and heard on the *Grade 1-3 Concert Band* page. Originally I had titled this composition **Koreana Suite**, but the title was too easily confused with the band piece--only one letter different--so I changed it to the more generic **Trio No. 1**, while keeping "Koreana" as a subtitle.

While both pieces utilize Korean folk music as source material, they do it in totally different ways. The band piece is a straightforward setting of three folk songs, while the three movements of this trio use melodies, rhythms, and motifs drawn from the songs as the basis for themes to be developed compositionally within the more-or-less strict musical forms of chaconne, scherzo, and fugue. The practice of drawing thematic material for composition from folk melodies is practically as old as the art of composition itself.

Here is a description of the three movements quoted from the preface to the score.

Chaconne: (*Andante con moto*)

The chaconne is a variation form, dating from the Baroque Period, in which a short theme, or "ground," is repeated over and over while other voices provide variations. In this movement, unlike the typical Baroque chaconne, the theme is not tied to a repeating harmonic pattern. The harmony varies and only the theme itself, or its inversion, repeats. The 8-measure ground, from the folk song "**Toraji Taryong**" (*Bellflower Song*), is played first by the cello alone, then followed by twelve variations and a coda, giving fourteen repetitions in all of the ground.

Scherzo: (*Allegro agitato*)

This movement follows a loose scherzo and trio form, with the trio theme incorporated into the reprise of the scherzo. The scherzo theme is from "**Millyang Arirang**," a sad—but not slow--song set in the town of Millyang. The trio theme is adapted from "**Hoe Sim Gok**," a shaman funeral song, and the rhythmic figure around which the movement is built derives from the percussion accompaniment to this song.

Fugue: (*Vivace con spirito*)

The fugue subject for the last movement is adapted from "**Nil Li Riya**," a light-hearted dancing tune whose title has no direct translation. Although fairly strict in form, this, like many other contemporary fugues, differs from the standard Baroque fugue in being less tonally grounded, with the answer coming in at the third rather than the fifth, and in the avoidance of strong cadences. Themes from the chaconne and scherzo are also worked into the fugal texture, unifying the three movement composition.

Trios no. 1 & 2 have both been recorded by Trio Casals and released on the albums **Trios and Sonatinas** and **A Grand Journey** from Navona Records. Please visit the Discography page of my website for more information.