

# Unit Plan—“Folk Music from Around the World”

## Elementary Band

Heather Loock

Students will learn about the culture of the countries where these pieces originate.

Students will compose rhythms and melodies.

Students will play pieces with correct notes, rhythm, and expression.

Students will compare/contrast the pieces from the unit, noting similarities and differences.

Students will understand that phrases have shape.

<http://www.jwpepper.com/2151546.item#>

**Title: Ahrirang**

Composer: Korean Folk Song, Arr. Robert Garofalo, Whaley

Publisher: Meredith Music

Voicing: Concert Band (VE)

Price: \$39.95

Paragraph description/explanation: I chose this piece because I think it would be a great introduction to the unit. Even though it is a folk song from Korea, it will be relatable to students because it has a recognizable melody. The middle section of the piece contains the melody in a round, so this will give students an opportunity to recognize that the melody can change from section to section. I also like that it has a flexible percussion part, which means that all of my percussionists will have an important part.

Activity: As students follow along in their music we will listen to a recording. Students will raise their hands only when they have the melody. They will notice how the melody is transferred amongst the different sections. As we play through the piece students will play FF when they have the melody and PP when they do not. Students will understand that it is important that the melody be heard over all the other parts.

<http://www.jwpepper.com/2475641.item>

**Title: Shenandoah**

Composer: American Folk Song, Arr. Michael Sweeney

Publisher: Hal Leonard Publishing Group

Voicing: Concert Band (VE)

Price: \$35.00

Paragraph description/explanation: This will be another familiar piece for students and again features different sections with the melody. There is a lot of room for dynamic variability in this piece, which also makes it interesting. The rich harmonies make the piece sound full and warm.

Activity: Students will explore the shape of phrases. I will pass out a worksheet with just the melody on it, divided into phrases. Students will draw the shape of the phrase over each phrase. I will collect these and look them over, to make sure students have the ‘right idea.’ As a class we will decide how to dynamically mark these phrases. This may involve having students from each section play the phrase in a different way and then the class decides which sounds ‘best.’ Or I can demonstrate different ways to play phrases. Students will mark these dynamics in their music. Students will understand that these dynamics help aurally create the shape of the phrase.

<http://www.jwpepper.com/2477597.item>

**Title: Images of Ireland**

Composer: Combination of 3 Irish Folk Songs, Arr. Brian Balmages

Publisher: FJH Music Company Inc.

Voicing: Concert Band (E)

Price: \$50.00

Paragraph description/explanation: This piece makes a good contrast to the first two because it has more of a march-like quality. I also like the idea of showcasing one of my better flutes, or dividing up the solo. There is also a steady percussion part underlying much of the piece. This piece will give students the opportunity to play in different/contrasting styles, as the first and third folk songs are lively and the second is slower.

Activity: For this piece students will compare and contrast the three different sections of this piece. It may be easier to do this through a recording, having students write down words that describe each section as they hear it. Then students can write a paragraph about how each section compares to the others. This will help students recognize the different styles of each folk song.

<http://www.jwpepper.com/10050939.item>

**Title: Swahili Folk Hymn**

Composer: East African Folk Song, Arr. Kevin Mixon

Publisher: Alfred Publishing, Belwin Division

Voicing: Concert Band (E)

Price: \$55.00

Paragraph description/explanation: This piece is very exciting and I think it will be fun for kids to play. The percussion section is a feature of this piece that gives students the opportunity to explore authentic rhythms. All students get to participate in the percussion section with clapping. I really like the opportunity that gives students and it adds an interesting section to the piece. The description of the piece says that students have opportunities to play improvised solos and that is definitely something I would explore with the band.

Activity: I think this piece would have many opportunities to explore different rhythms. I would have students compose their own rhythms within guidelines. It might also be a good activity to have students perform their compositions on drums for the band, or in small groups. This way all students get to experience the authentic African instrumentation.

<http://www.jwpepper.com/10014925.item>

**Title: Land of the Rising Sun**

Composer: Japanese Folk Song Trilogy, Arr. Michael Story

Publisher: Alfred Publishing Belwin Division

Voicing: Concert Band (E)

Price: \$55.00

Paragraph description/explanation: This piece features solo instruments which will give students an opportunity to perform alone. This piece features 3 Japanese folk songs, the first of which students may recognize. There is also a prominent percussion part. Students may hear similarities to the piece from Korea.

Activity: Although I cannot see the music, it sounds as if part of this piece revolves around the pentatonic scale. Students will be asked to compose a short (4 bar) melody using specific notes and rhythms. These compositions can then be strung together and possibly played on the concert. As a form of assessment, students can be asked to play their melody or the melody of a classmate. Students should include proper markings like dynamics in their compositions.