

More About KOREAN SUITE

While he was in the army and stationed in Korea, American composer John Barnes Chance became acquainted with a very popular folk song called **Arirang**, which he later used as the basis of what would become one of the cornerstones of the concert band literature, his **Variations on a Korean Folk Song**.

As the only Korean folk song that is widely-known in the world outside of Korea, **Arirang** has also anchored virtually every other piece of concert band literature that is based on Korean source music. It is a beautiful song that well-deserves its popularity, but I chose to leave it out of **Korean Suite** because I feel that most of what can effectively be said with it in the concert band medium has probably already been said.

So rather than serve up yet another setting of **Arirang**, straining to somehow find something new to say with it, I chose for this arrangement three lesser-known--outside of Korea, that is--but equally fine Korean folk songs that deserve some exposure in the Western world.

Here they are, as described in the preface to the score:

1. **Sae Taryung** (SAY tar-yung) The title of this song means "Song of Birds." It describes the flight and singing of various species of birds.
2. **Toraji Taryung** (tor-AH-jee tar-yung) This beautiful song describes a young girl picking the roots of the *toraji*, or bellflower plant. It is one of the most widely-loved folk songs in Korea, rivaling **Arirang** in popularity.
3. **Nil Li Ria** (neel LEE ree-AH) The title of this witch song, made up of Korean nonsense syllables, has no translation. The song is most commonly sung as an accompaniment for dancing.