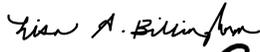
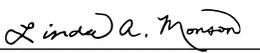


THE TREATMENT OF JAPANESE TRADITIONAL MUSIC IN THE CHORAL
WORKS OF KO MATSUSHITA

by

Bryan Hiroto Stenson
A Dissertation
Submitted to the
Graduate Faculty
of
George Mason University
in Partial Fulfillment of
The Requirements for the Degree
of
Doctor of Musical Arts
Choral Conducting

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to my loving wife, McKenna Marie Stenson, my parents, Randy and Rachel Stenson, and to the country of my birth and upbringing, Japan.

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I would like to thank the many friends, relatives, and supporters who have made this happen. Ko Matsushita granted me an interview which provided invaluable information towards my research. His kindness and generosity cannot go understated. Dr. Kanako Chikami assisted in my initial correspondence with Ko Matsushita. Keiko Toki (Toki sensei) who assisted me in researching the Tsugaru region and shared her experience of growing up in Aomori prefecture. Fumiko Yamaguchi and Atsuko Kuwana assisted in my translations and correspondences with Matsushita. Abbey Leier-Murphy and Lucas Abegglen assisted in editing, and I am grateful for all the drafts they read and helpful suggestions they provided. My parents, Randy and Rachel, served as assistant researchers by scanning articles from Japanese sources not accessible in the USA and shipping me books I would order to their apartment in Japan. My loving wife, McKenna, assisted me in my research, read countless drafts, and motivated me by always cheering me on. Drs. Billingham, Lavengood, Robinson and Engebretson of my committee were of invaluable help. Finally, thank you to all of the teachers, mentors, and friends in my life who encouraged and supported me throughout my education.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Japanese Society for Rights of Authors, Composers and Publishers	JASRAC
<i>Nippon Hōsō Kyōkai</i> (Japan Broadcasting Corporation)	NHK
Japan Choral Association	JCA
International Federation for Choral Music	IFCM
American Choral Director's Association	ACDA

ABSTRACT

THE TREATMENT OF JAPANESE TRADITIONAL MUSIC IN THE CHORAL WORKS OF KO MATSUSHITA

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George Mason University, 2022

Dissertation Director: Lisa Billingham

Ko Matsushita (b. 1962) is one of the most prominent figures in current Japanese choral music. With musical training both in Japan and in Hungary, he is known for his ability to write in multiple styles and genres. Some of his Latin sacred works such as *Jubilate Deo* and *O Lux Beata Trinitas* have become popular in international choral competitions which has fostered his popularity abroad; what remains relatively underperformed in Western ensembles, however, are his compositions based on *minyō*, traditional folk music of Japan. The purpose of this study is to understand how Matsushita balances his own compositional style with Japanese folk elements within his choral works based on *minyō* through the study of five pieces based in Japanese folk traditions: “Aizu Bandaisan,” “Itsuki no Komori Uta,” “Tsugaru Jongara-bushi”, “Kotoba-asobi Uta,” and “Yukamuli Uta.” Each work is first contextualized with relevant background information that will pertain to points made in the analysis. Then, I analyze

the pieces to determine what compositional techniques are being used and how they correspond with factors such as regional dialects, traditional scales, imitations of instruments or settings, and folk song type. Finally, I provide conducting and rehearsal considerations to encourage the programming of these pieces for Western choral ensembles.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

The Japanese choral tradition is composed of many influences from both within Japan and internationally. Research on choral traditions of the West is substantial, but a comparable amount of research has not been dedicated to Japan's choral traditions. Recently, there have been scholarly pursuits to fill the gap, and notable research has been done in Japan's choral history, Japanese folk songs, stylistic considerations for performance, and broader studies on choral music's development in Japan.¹ This dissertation is possibly the first extended study by a scholar of a Western institution into one specific Japanese composer of choral music. The purpose of this dissertation is to study five selected works of the world-renowned Japanese composer, Ko Matsushita, and provide insight and analysis into his choral settings of Japanese folk music, or *minyō*. While his contemporary compositions based on Latin texts, such as *O Lux Beata Trinitas* and *Jubilate Deo*, have been performed in the West, having been frequently featured at conventions, festivals, and competitions, his arrangements of Japanese folk songs remain underperformed in the United States. Focusing on these five selected works not only brings Matsushita's compositions into light, but also shows the progression of Japanese choral music through time and its peculiar blend of influences.

¹ Notable examples include Anthony Palmer, Masashi Kishimoto, Matthew Howell, and Mihiko Tsutsumi.

Literature Review

Resources that discuss Japan's choral history

To examine the history of choral music in Japan, one must also examine Japan's history and general information about the country. Having grown up in Japan, a lot of this information is familiar to me, but for others wishing to learn more about Japan, there are many resources on the country's history and background available. Many, if not all, of the prefectures in Japan have their own official websites which provide insight on regional historical facts and cultural events which may not be discussed in other main sources which look at Japan on a broader scope.

Regarding Japanese choral music, Palmer's articles, "Choral Music in Japan" and "Choral Music in Japan: A Hybrid Art" in *The Choral Journal*, provide a good starting point for a broad understanding of the choral tradition in Japan.² What is most valuable in these articles is their history and documentation of the primary choral competitions in Japan for school aged, collegiate, and amateur choirs: the NHK Choral Concours, the AJDL (now JCA) -Asahi Concours, and the Chorus Concours. This provides insight on the choral culture of Japan, and more importantly gives descriptions of what types of music Japanese choirs are singing. These articles, however, are a bit dated: much has changed in Japan since the mid-1980s. The economic bubble that fueled a lot of Japan's

² Anthony J. Palmer, "Choral Music in Japan," *The Choral Journal* 27, no. 4 (November 1986): 15–24; Anthony J. Palmer, "Choral Music in Japan: A Hybrid Art," *The Choral Journal* 35, no. 5 (December 1994): 35–41.

post-WWII growth has long since burst, and there have been many advances in technology and access to music that may have affected current choral trends.

More current research fills the void. Mihoko Tsutsumi's dissertation on the "History of the Japan Choral Association" discusses the development of the choral competitions and further elaborates on the JCA, a choral federation of over 5,000 registered choirs, and are akin to the American Choral Directors Association in terms of influence and scope. The national choral competitions have played a major role in not only choral education in Japan but also compositional development.³ Masashi Kishimoto supports Tsutsumi's findings by the prominence of the Concours choral competition system that is in place in Japan. These began in 1948 after WWII, but most information prior to 1980 is either lost or very hard to find. Most interesting to me was the development of *orasho*, a choral tradition that came out of Christianity in feudal Japan. *Orasho* is a code word of sorts for "oratorio." Early Japanese Christians would often find ingenious ways to match Japanese words into Latin texts such as "*kyrie eleison*" becoming "*kiriya renzu*." This practice was essential for their survival as Christianity was outlawed in Japan during the Tokugawa period. Kishimoto discusses how the opening of Japan to Western trade during the Meiji Restoration broadened the scope of music in Japan. Western composers such as Beethoven and Bach became popular with their messages of brotherhood in a time of modernizing Japan, especially after WWII.

³ Mihoko Tsutsumi, "A history of the Japan Choral Association" (PhD diss., The Florida State University, 2007).

Kishimoto traces the development of the Japanese choral tradition and its relationship with Buddhism and Western influences such as Christianity. He draws a connection between these religious and cultural influences and how they affected the contemporary performances of traditional Japanese folk-based music.⁴ His main argument is that Japanese choral music is ultimately a blend of Japanese and Western influences, which is re-articulated in Palmer's second article on Japanese choral music titled, "Choral Music in Japan: A Hybrid Art."⁵

Other general information on the history of choral music in Japan can be found in *The Cambridge Companion to Choral Music* in the contributions by Jing Ling-Tam and Gene Cho made in *The Cambridge Companion to Choral Music*, edited by André de Quadros. They discuss how *shoka* (group singing) became mandatory as part of the Western based school curriculum developed during the Meiji era (1868-1912) and highlights the prominence and cultural value of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony to 20th-century Japan.⁶ Like previous sources, Ling-Tam and Cho discuss the different choral competitions of Japan, but also break down the categories and levels in which choirs can

⁴ Masashi Kishimoto, "Tracing the Development of Japanese Choral Tradition, and the Influence of Buddhism and Western Music" (DMA diss., North Dakota State University, 2012).

⁵ Palmer, "Choral Music in Japan: A Hybrid Art," 35–41.

⁶ Jing Ling-Tam and Gene J. Cho, "Choral music in East Asia: China, Japan, and Korea" in *The Cambridge companion to choral music*, ed. André de Quadros, Boston University, 2012, 154–156.

compete. They also provide information on what is happening in Japan's neighbors: China, Korea, and Taiwan.

Information on Japanese choral compositional trends

As mentioned before, Palmer delves into the aesthetics of contemporary Japanese choral music as being a blend of two art forms. This information is very helpful in identifying common trends throughout various Japanese composers and sheds light on some ideological factors that affect how Japanese view art. Nature, spirituality, and wordplay are key themes present in Japanese folk-based choral music. There are many examples of pieces used to show his arguments as well as some general background knowledge on traditional Japanese scales. This article is useful in finding avenues to compare the folk-based works of Matsushita with others.

Matthew Howell offers even further insight on choral adaptations of Japanese folk-based music.⁷ While he doesn't mention Matsushita, he does analyze and discuss the works of three of his contemporaries. It also sheds light on performance considerations of Japanese choral works as well as a model for analysis of Japanese works.

A lot of information on choral trends can be found through sources provided by the JCA and NHK Concours websites and archives. Accessible through their online archives are programs from national choral competitions, winners of district, regional, and national level awards, and lists of required repertoire for the competitions. There is also access to performance videos through NHK's website for every ensemble that

⁷ Matthew Howell, "A Conductor's Introduction to the Performance of Modern Japanese Choral Music" (DMA diss, The University of Arizona, 2008).

competed in the annual competition. Through these databases, it is possible to see which composers and pieces were featured during national choral competitions.

Information on Japanese folk music

Knowledge of various forms of Japanese traditional music is necessary to fully examine subsets within Japanese folk music. The *Nihon Minyō Taikan*, or *Overview of Japanese Folksongs*, is an encyclopedia published by NHK. With multiple volumes that cover every prefecture in Japan, it is helpful source in finding immediate general background information about specific folk songs.⁸ However, due to lack of immediate access, I found myself utilizing various other encyclopedias and reference books that pertained more directly to the pieces up for analysis. The *Nihon Minyō Daijiten*, an encyclopedia attributed to Kenji Asano, contains the information on background, lyrics, and geographical origin of 2,400 folk songs and terminology.⁹ It also discusses various categorization methods for each folk song such as by type of function or prefecture of origin. The *Nihon Minyō Daijiten* delves into various classification systems for Japanese folk songs, notably Kunio Yanagita's method of categorizing folk songs based on the physical setting that the song would have been sung in, and Kasho Machida who based his method on the industry associated with a folk song's origins.¹⁰ While the information

⁸ Nippon Hoso Kyokai (NHK), "*Nihon Minyō Taikan*," (Tokyo: Nippon Hoso Shuppan Kyokai, n.d.).

⁹ Kenji Asano, et. al. *Nihon Minyō Daijiten*, (Tokyo: Yuzankaku Publishing, 1983).

¹⁰ Asano, 7–18.

is useful, the level of detail on these classification systems was at times too expansive for the purposes of my research, but it provided an essential gateway for finding initial information on each piece that was studied for analysis. It is a tertiary source and functions like a catalog and encyclopedia.

Yanagita's system of folk song typology is also discussed in Kishimoto's dissertation (2012). He outlines different scales, from Fumio Koizumi's research, and genres, or *bushi*, within Japanese folk music. There are five different scales (*onkai*), and various classifications of songs that they are associated with. Some of these classifications include: Ta Uta (Farm songs), Niwa Uta (Garden Songs), Yama Uta (Mountain songs), Umi Uta (Ocean songs), Waza Uta (Work songs), Dōka (Songs of path), Iwai Uta (Celebration songs), Matsuri Uta (Festival songs), Asobi Uta (Play songs), and Warabe Uta (Children's songs). I found these classifications to be the most aligned with Matsushita's perspective on Japanese folk music, which I was able to discuss with him during our interview.

Nihon Warabe Zenshū, a 27-volume encyclopedia series that is specific to Children's Songs in Japan. The series is organized by prefecture, with all forty-seven of Japan's prefectures represented. Many prefectures are in their own volume. The volume that pertains to my research is Volume 25: *Kumamoto Miyazaki Wareba Uta*, or "Children's Songs from Kumamoto and Miyazaki," which I used during my research and analysis of "Itsuki Komori Uta," a Matsushita composition based on Japanese lullaby of the same title.

Onkai to Nihonjin: Wakayama-ken no Warabe Uta Kenkyū by Ken Izumi

specifically examines the children's songs from Wakayama Prefecture which he collected and analyzed during his time conducting research in the area from 1985–1990.¹¹ Izumi takes a more analytical approach to his list of children's songs and identifies the scale that each song is in. He also is a tertiary resource on Fumio Koizumi's method of scale identification, which he outlines in Part 2 of his book.

Fumio Koizumi, Japanese ethnomusicologist, professor, and speaker is considered in Japan to be a major figure in ethnomusicological research regarding Japanese folk music. He is credited with heightening the popularity of Japanese folk music, and often appeared on television and radio to speak on topics regarding Japanese folk music and culture.¹² His research materials are currently preserved at Tokyo Geijutsu Daigaku (Tokyo National University of Fine Arts and Music). Unfortunately, those research materials remain unavailable to those residing outside of Japan. Koizumi's book *Nihon no Oto* (1977), or "*Sound of Japan*," discusses musical elements that are the basis of Japanese folk music.¹³ These include scales which he lists as tetrachords, rhythmic and meter structures, syllabic patterns, instruments, performance practices, and construction of folk songs. He is also concerned with Japanese folk music's history, and its

¹¹ Ken Izumi, *Onkai to Nihonjin: Wakayama-ken no Warabe Uta Kenkyū*, (Kyoto: Yanagihara Publishing, 1995), 1.

¹² Masakata Kanazawa, "Koizumi, Fumio," *Grove Music Online*, 2001, <https://doi-org.mutex.gmu.edu/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.15274>

¹³ Fumio Koizumi, *Nihon no Oto: Sekai no Naka no Nihon Ongaku*, (Tokyo: Seidosha, 1977; repr., Tokyo: Heibonsha, 2020).

relationship with Japan, Asia, and the rest of the world. His research provides ample information on how to frame Japanese folk music in an analytical manner. In contrast to the encyclopedias listed above, Koizumi goes much more in detail in the musical components and practices that form Japanese folk music rather than being a compilation of folk songs.

The works of the ethnomusicologist, David Hughes, have proven to be an invaluable resource on Japanese traditional folk music that is written in English.¹⁴ His book, *Traditional Folk Song in Modern Japan*, discusses various aspects of Japanese folk song, or *minyō*, such as its history, cultural impact, development, performance practices, instrumentation, musical features, schooling systems, categorization systems, and recordings. His ability to present *minyō* in through lens of modern Japan is a model for presenting choral works based on Japanese folk songs by contemporary Japanese composers. He is one of the few experts on the subject who has written studies in English, allowing me to be able to verify my own translations and interpretations from Japanese sources. *Traditional Folk Song in Modern Japan* also has an extensive bibliography, from which I was able to find new sources for my research.

Many Japanese folk-based choral music has its origins in instrumental works. Gerald McGoldrick devoted his thesis to a specific style of shamisen known as the

¹⁴ David W. Hughes, *Traditional Folk Song in Modern Japan: Sources, Sentiment and Society*, (Kent: Global Oriental, 2008).

tsugaru-jamisen.¹⁵ I chose this source with the intention of using it as a guide to analyze Ko Matsushita's composition "Tsugaru Jongara-bushi", an a cappella TTBB choral work that emulates the fast-paced rhythmic style and melodic writing of *tsugaru-jamisen*. McGoldrick's thesis discusses extensively the timbral and physical properties of the shamisen, as well as the style in which it is played.

Possibly one of the most well-known English sources on *tsugaru-jamisen* comes from Gerald Groemer in his book, *The Spirit of Tsugaru*.¹⁶ Groemer discusses *Tsugaru-jamisen* repertoire in detail, and provides important historical background on the region, instrument, and performances. His transcriptions of various performers playing the same piece clearly displays the *tsugaru-jamisen* tradition of ornamentation and individualizing the music. Specifically, his transcriptions and discussion on the development of "Tsugaru Jongara-bushi", one of the staples of *tsugaru-jamisen* repertoire, was fundamental in contextualizing my analysis of Matsushita's arrangement of the same title. The second part of the book is a translated autobiography of Takahashi Chikuzan, an internationally acclaimed *shamisen* player. Chikuzan is considered in Japan to be a major figure in *shamisen* playing. His autobiography, while interesting, is better suited to those studying his life specifically, although he does provide anecdotes about specific pieces and the training system in which he was subject to. The history and development of the shamisen

¹⁵ Gerald McGoldrick. "The *Tsugaru-Jamisen*: Its Origins, Construction, and Music" (MA thesis, York University, Toronto, 2005) 63–91, 108–119.

¹⁶ Gerald Groemer, *The Spirit of Tsugaru, Second Revised Edition: Blind Musicians, Tsugaru-jamisen, and the Folk Music of Northern Japan, with Autobiography of Takahashi Chikuzan*, (Hirosaki: Tsugaru Shobō, 2012).

is interesting, but what is most useful in this source is its breakdown of the musical characteristics that are present in *tsugaru-jamisen* music. By understanding these musical attributes, I was able to see how Ko Matsushita incorporates them in his arrangement of the folk tune.

Lastly, the publications of Matsushita's pieces based in Japanese folk song provide general background information of each of the arranged folk songs. They are concise in their description of each piece, but they are a resource that is in both Japanese and English, which could be useful to choral conductors wishing to perform this music in the United States. Each publication provides text and translations for each folk song arranged. There are no pronunciation guides, and it is my intent to fill in that gap in this study. In addition to provide background information of the folk songs presented in the collections, each publication includes a preface authored by Matsushita, in which he typically discusses the origins of the compositions, such as the organization who commissioned the pieces and choirs that have premiered the works. The publications used in this dissertation include:

1. *Nihon no Min'yō Dai 1 Shū*, edition Kawai Publishing (1997)
2. *Nihon no Min'yō Dai 2 Shū*, edition Kawai Publishing (2000)
3. *Ki no Kuni no Kodomo Uta 3*, edition Kawai Publishing (2003)
4. *Nihon no Min'yō Dai 3 Shū*, edition Kawai Publishing (2002)
5. *Nihon no Min'yō Dai 7 Shū*, edition Kawai Publishing (2010)

Information on Ko Matsushita:

A detailed interview with Ko Matsushita, conducted by Andrea Angelini and published by the peer-reviewed *International Choral Bulletin*, is very enlightening on understanding Matsushita's perspectives on music, specifically choral and vocal writing. He alludes to the variety of styles in which he composes stating, "I try to communicate this meaning through a multitude of rhetoric."¹⁷

In my research, I conducted an interview with Ko Matsushita himself, which is published in the contents of this dissertation. In my conversation with Matsushita, we discussed his background, compositional process, influences, and his observations on the Japanese choral community. In addition, we also discussed the pieces for analysis specifically. His perspective provided information regarding his thought process behind creating these works and furthered my research on the folk songs themselves. The interview pointed me to sources that Matsushita used himself, and those resources are listed in the interview transcript.

Matsushita has his own publications and conference presentations as well—resources that anyone interested in his compositional process will find useful. His article, "Distinction of Japanese Native Sound Formation and Attempt of Fusing with Choral Music," published in *Exclusivity and Coexistence: The 5th International Symposium*,

¹⁷ "Interview of Ko Matsushita: Composing music for God and to unify the heart of people around the world," interview by Andrea Angelini, *International Choral Bulletin*, (July 2, 2016), http://icb.ifcm.net/en_US/matsushita_interview/.

Folklore, Music, Work of Art in 1997, discusses how he came about composing choral music based on Japanese folk music. He elaborates on his studies in Hungary and describes how he was inspired by Bartók, who was able to incorporate the pentatonic folk songs of Hungary in his compositions. Drawing a connection between the folk music of Hungary and Japan, Matsushita discusses how Bartók can be a model on how to compose and arrange music centered around Japanese folk music. He discusses his own insights on the value of these compositions, and even argues that it is a way to preserve Japanese folk music. The article also gives examples of how he applies Bartók's compositional principles in his own works, such as the use of tetrachords based on pentatonic scales, tritone substitutions, the Axis system, and Fibonacci segmentation.

Matsushita's website, as of the writing of this dissertation, is current and periodically updated to provide background information such as a short biography, list of ensembles he conducts, upcoming performances, and a catalogue of his published works. For choral musicians interested in his music and his activities, the website is a starting point to find out more.

Research Plan

When asked, Matsushita stated there are five themes he thinks are representative of his music:¹⁸

1. Traditional music of Japan

¹⁸ "Interview of Ko Matsushita: Composing music for God and to unify the heart of people around the world," interview by Andrea Angelini, *International Choral Bulletin*, (July 2, 2016), http://icb.ifcm.net/en_US/matsushita_interview/.

2. Catholic religious music
3. Etudes “aimed to improve skills of choirs and leaders.”
4. Arrangements of pop music and Japanese school songs
5. Original choral music that doesn’t fit any of the above categories.

For the purposes of this study, the focus will be placed on his first-listed category, “traditional music of Japan.” This provides a solid starting point from which my study will progress. While these thematic elements are important markers in classifying his styles, they do not necessarily discuss the compositional components of each style, difficulty levels, or use of harmony.

Regarding formulating a methodology to study his works within the genre of “traditional music of Japan,” the following questions guided the research for this dissertation: How does Matsushita write in this style? What elements of the folk tradition is he implementing in his music? What are the distinct characteristics of Japanese folk music? Are there compositional consistencies found across his *minyō*-based compositions? How does his own musical background with training and set of influences affect his compositional choices in this genre?

To answer these questions, it was necessary not only to understand the fundamentals of Japanese traditional music, but also to investigate Matsushita’s distinct voice in this genre. This study explored this topic through analysis of five of his compositions in the category of “traditional music of Japan”: “Aizu Bandaisan” for women’s choir, “Itsuki no Komori Uta” for women’s choir, “Tsugaru Jongara-bushi” for

men's choir, "Kotoba-asobi Uta" for children's choir, and "Yukamuli Uta" for mixed choir.

The analyses of these works highlight the signature compositional elements that Ko Matsushita employs, such as extended harmony, cluster chords, mixed meter, and adherence to the original Japanese folk song elements such as melody, text, scales, imitation of instruments, ornamentations, and rhythmic styles. These folk song elements often are varied from region to region in Japan, so the source material of the folk songs is an important factor to consider when analyzing Matsushita's settings of these pieces. Some of his settings of traditional Japanese music incorporate modern-styled choral writing.

When researching any composer, it is important to also understand the non-musical influences that affect the composer's perspective on creating music. What are some of the religious or philosophical influences that shaped the development of choral music in Japan? Kishimoto attributes the development of Japan's choral tradition to the influences of Buddhism, Christianity, and the music of western culture.¹⁹ In terms of the current state of Japanese choral music, he concludes by saying "folksongs and modern traditions are blended. Thereby producing contemporary Japanese choral music, the result of intertwining of both Western and Eastern cultures."²⁰ I believe that Ko Matsushita reflects this blend of the two hemispheres and stays true to the spirit of Japanese choral

¹⁹ Kishimoto, 1.

²⁰ Kishimoto, 60.

music. Understanding these components of his life as well as his musical influences assists greatly in analyzing stylistic qualities in his compositions.

Design and Methodology

This dissertation's primary focus is the analyses of five selected works by Ko Matsushita from various points in time throughout his career. They also reflect the diversity of ensemble types for which he composes. The selected works are not only varied by ensemble type, but also by region of origin and folk song type. I analyze in a fashion similar to Matthew Howell in his dissertation "A Conductor's Introduction to the Performance of Modern Japanese Choral Music," including study of structure, harmony, melody, rhythm, growth, and text setting.²¹ Lastly, for those interested in programming the discussed works, conducting considerations and rehearsal guidance are provided at the end of each analysis, along with pronunciation guides and translations.

As a secondary endeavor, I interviewed Ko Matsushita about his compositional process and thoughts on Japanese choral music. Getting his personal insight into the pieces that he composed provided context and understanding into his own thought process on each piece.

Limitations

This study will use prominent works of Matsushita in the vein of traditional music of Japan. Matsushita is a successful choral composer, and has many other different genres

²¹ Matthew Howell, "A Conductor's Introduction to the Performance of Modern Japanese Choral Music," 51–71.

of composition, but for the purposes of studying the balance and blend of Japanese and Western traditions in his choral music, works based in traditional Japanese music provide clear examples for analyses. Prominent works have been determined by use of frequency in Japanese choral competitions, frequency of republication, and based on international frequency of performances. I will attend to the setting of the voice on these folk based compositions; therefore, a cappella pieces will take precedent in analysis.²² Matsushita's own opinions will also play a factor in considering which pieces to analyze in the study.

This study is also limited in its scope of availability to compositions. Only published and available works are used. As Matsushita is a living composer who is still creating music, there will inevitably be new information that is not yet attainable. This dissertation serves as a foundation for future scholarly studies into the works and styles of Ko Matsushita and focuses on elements found across his settings of traditional Japanese music.

²² This, of course, will leave out countless amounts of compositions to thorough analysis, however, this does not mean that they are any less valuable in understanding the compositional style and methods of Ko Matsushita. It merely means that they will not be used in analysis for this dissertation.

CHAPTER TWO: A BRIEF HISTORY ON JAPANESE CHORAL MUSIC

To understand the compositional styles of Ko Matsushita, we must first place him in context by examining the history and compositional trends of Japanese choral music. Japan's choral tradition stems from the Meiji Era (1868-1912), a period of dramatic industrialization.

From the mid-16th century, Japan was closed off from the rest of the world due to isolationist policies instilled by the Tokugawa shogunate known as *Sakoku*, until Commodore Matthew C. Perry sailed into Shimoda Bay and demanded Japan open to world trade in 1853.²³ After the Japanese found they could not defend themselves against the Americans due to the outdated nature of their technology, the Treaty of Kanagawa was signed, connecting Japan with the West. Japan quickly modernized to compete with the rest of the industrialized Western nations at the time, and adopted many Western policies in its government, military, and education. A public school system was created in 1872.²⁴ *Shoka*, or group singing, was a mandated school activity that promoted patriotic pride as well as musical training.²⁵ Luther Whiting Mason, whose uncle Lowell Mason had established a music education system in Boston in the 1830s, was brought to Japan to

²³ Anatoliy Anshin, *Cultural Sociology of the Middle East, Asia, and Africa: An Encyclopedia*, vol. 3, *East and South East Asia*, (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Reference, 2012), 148–150.

²⁴ Palmer, “Choral Music in Japan: A Hybrid Art,” 11.

²⁵ Jing Ling-Tam and Gene J. Cho, “Choral music in East Asia: China, Japan, and Korea” in *The Cambridge companion to choral music*, ed. André de Quadros, Boston University, 2012, 154–156.

instill the same music education practices from Boston into the Japanese public school system.²⁶ Additionally, the ending of the ban on Christianity led to American Protestantism propagating the development of Men's Glee Clubs during the Meiji Era, which can be seen as another important step in Japan's choral tradition.²⁷ This resulted in Japanese folk and nationalistic music being blended with a Western form of singing ensemble. This mix between the West and Japan is one of the key characteristics of Japanese choral music throughout its history.²⁸

It was not until after WWII, however, that choral music really began to blossom. The school system was remodeled to match the "American pattern of six-three-three-four," a change instituted by General McArthur in 1947.²⁹ Music was a mandatory subject, but more importantly, music was also offered as an elective where additional hours could be spent in a specialized ensemble such as band or choir. These elective "clubs" in the Japanese public school system would meet all year round, and the students developed a very strong proficiency in music. This elective club system is still present

²⁶ Palmer, "Choral Music in Japan: A Hybrid Art," 11.

²⁷ Mihoko Tsutsumi, "A history of the Japan Choral Association" (PhD diss., The Florida State University, 2007), 8.

²⁸ Palmer, 11.

²⁹ Palmer, "Choral Music in Japan," 15; "Six-three-three-four" refers to a type of educational system that is used in Japan and in other countries where students spend six years in elementary school (grades 1-6), three years in a middle school (grades 7-9), and three in a high school (grades 10-12). The four refers to the four years of university. Japan outlines the grades by listing first the type of school followed by the grade in that particular school. For example, in Japan, what we would call 7th grade is called *Chūgakkō Ichinensei* (Middle School Year 1).

today. With the emergence of choral competitions, many of these school elective programs began to compete in the national choral competitions, or *concours*, in Japan, such as the NHK Concours, the JCA-Asahi Concours, and the Chorus Concours.³⁰ In addition to school choirs, the JCA-Asahi and Chorus Concours are open to professional and amateur groups as well. These choral competitions are major annual events in the Japanese choral calendar, awarding medals and national rankings, and are often regionally and nationally televised. As such, they have been significant measures of progress of the Japanese choral community since the first competition organized by the National Music Association in November of 1927.³¹

The leading entity in the support of choral activity in Japan is the Japan Choral Association (JCA), which was founded in 1948 under the name the All-Japan Chorus League (AJCA).³² According to the JCA, there are over 5,200 choirs registered in the organization with over 150,000 individual members belonging to fifty-four regional associations.³³ These choral competitions and the JCA help shape the progress of Japanese choral music by often having a required piece alongside a “free” piece of the choir’s choosing from an approved list of works for a given year. While Western

³⁰ Tsutsumi, “A history of the Japan Choral Association,” 52.

³¹ Ibid, 10.

³² This happens to be 11 years earlier than the founding of its USA counterpart, the American Choral Director’s association.

³³ Tsutsumi, “A history of the Japan Choral Association,” viii; Japan Choral Association, (April 2019), <http://jcanet.or.jp>.

composers are included on these lists, the emphasis is on promoting Japanese composers and publications. Mihoko Tsutsumi cites Yoshio Mizushima in compiling statistical data regarding performed compositions by Japanese choirs in the last sixty years. She states, “according to Mizushima, 41% of the pieces sung by the top ten groups in the national competition during the last three years were compositions in Japanese, with Latin pieces being the next most popular (34%), followed by German compositions (6%), and Italian compositions (6%).”³⁴ Much of this drive to sing Japanese music was pushed by the founder of the Tokyo Philharmonic Chorus, Nobuaki Tanaka, who promoted Japanese composers and their music.³⁵

The JCA has been a prominent member of the global choral community and was a founding member of the International Federation for Choral Music (IFCM) in 1982. While still generally underappreciated in the United States, a handful of Japanese choral composers have been able to attain global appeal with their works. Many Japanese composers have training in both their home country as well as Europe, a tradition stemming back to the early twentieth century with Rentaro Taki and Kousaku Yamada. This duality in musical study is a major factor in the unique hybrid quality of Japanese choral music,³⁶ with its multiple styles and genres that embrace both Japanese folk traditions as well as Western.

³⁴ Tsutsumi, 3.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Palmer, “Choral Music in Japan: A Hybrid Art,” 11.

In a way, the development of a choral tradition incorporating traditional folk music mirrors the valorization of rural life that started during the “bubble” years and intensified thereafter.³⁷ This valorization can be seen in the idea of *furusato*, a Japanese term referring to one’s hometown or home village, brought about as an “antithesis of Japan’s visions of modernization and internationalization.”³⁸ Ko Matsushita and many other Japanese composers embrace the idea of *furusato* when composing settings of traditional Japanese music. It parallels the dichotomy of a folk tradition being juxtaposed by the modern and Western influences surrounding it.

Modern Japanese choral composers embrace aspects that are uniquely Japanese while writing in a Western medium. Whether it is setting Japanese poetry in a contemporary style or adapting older folk music into choral arrangements, there is an emphasis now on promoting and preserving Japanese music within Japan’s choral community. Matsushita is not only a contributor of repertoire to the choral community, but also an influencer through his work as a composer, teacher, clinician, and conductor.

³⁷ The “bubble” years refers to the period of accelerated economic growth that Japan experienced from the early 1970’s through to the early 1990’s. After this period, the economic “bubble” burst, and Japan’s economy went into a period of depression.

³⁸ Sug-in Kweon, “Politics of furusato in Aizu, Japan: Local identities and metropolitan discourses,” (PhD diss., Stanford University, 1994), 26, <https://search-proquest-com.mutex.gmu.edu/docview/304108943?accountid=14541>.

CHAPTER THREE: KO MATSUSHITA, COMPOSER

Brief Biography

Ko Matsushita follows a tradition of a multiplicity of styles and trained in both Japan and Hungary. Although he sang in choirs throughout primary school, he states that it was not until high school that he knew he wanted to pursue a career in choral music: “During my youth I received an intense education in piano and acoustics, but it was when I became a high school student that I really started to love music.”³⁹ He attributes this decision to a positive experience with a choral teacher who fostered his already strong interest.⁴⁰ This led to him pursue conservatory study in composition at Kunitachi College of Music and choral conducting at the Kodály Institute in Kecskemét, Hungary.

Matsushita is currently regarded as a major figure in choral music from Japan. He is listed in *The Cambridge Companion to Choral Music* as one of the notable composers since the founding of the JCA.⁴¹ He also conducts several choral groups both in Japan and abroad, including the Metropolitan Chorus of Tokyo (MET), an ensemble comprising multiple smaller choral groups scattered around Tokyo.⁴² MET is a flagship ensemble for

³⁹ “Interview of Ko Matsushita: Composing music for God and to unify the heart of people around the world,” interview by Andrea Angelini, *International Choral Bulletin*, (July 2, 2016), http://icb.ifcm.net/en_US/matsushita_interview/.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Jing Ling-Tam and Gene J. Cho, “Choral music in East Asia: China, Japan, and Korea” in *The Cambridge companion to choral music*, ed. André de Quadros, Boston University, 2012, 156.

⁴² *Choral Journal* 55, no. 6 (January 2015), 24.

Matsushita and has participated in festivals and events worldwide. MET sang in the world premiere of *Ah Nagasaki: Ashes into Light* by American composer Robert Kyr in 2008.⁴³ In 2015, MET was invited to be one of the featured choirs at the ACDA National Convention in Salt Lake City, UT.⁴⁴ His career as a choral composer and conductor was highly recognized in 2005, when he was awarded the Robert Edler Prize for Choral Music, an annual award given to those who demonstrate choral excellence on a global scale.

The groups that perform his works reflect the variety of styles in which he composes: Elementary, Middle, and High School choirs, amateur community groups, *okasan* (mother) and *otosan* (father) choirs, collegiate, and professional ensembles. While he has had much success in Japan, he has become globally renown for several of his more challenging pieces. He states that one of his proudest moments was when his “Jubilate Deo” was performed by Choir KAMER of Latvia at the 2008 World Sun Songs Festival in Riga.⁴⁵

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ “Interview of Ko Matsushita: Composing music for God and to unify the heart of people around the world,” interview by Andrea Angelini, *International Choral Bulletin*, (July 2, 2016), http://icb.ifcm.net/en_US/matsushita_interview/.

Matsushita's Thoughts on Japanese Choral Music

At the start of this research, I was fortunate enough to conduct an interview with Matsushita to gain an understanding of his own perspective on his compositions, Japanese choral music, and the selected pieces for analysis. The interview was conducted in the Lobby Lounge of the Keio Plaza Hotel in Hachioji, Tokyo on December 23, 2019. The first half of the interview broadly discusses his work as a composer, sense of musical style, Japanese choral music, and the challenges of bringing Japanese choral music to communities outside of Japan; the second half largely focuses specifically on the pieces to be analyzed. Our conversation was mainly in Japanese with some interspersed English, and a full transcript of the interview translated fully into English by the author can be found in Appendix E.

Through our conversation, I was able to gain a better grasp of Matsushita's compositional process and his thoughts on Japanese choral music. I began by asking him what he thinks makes his music unique—in other words, what his strengths are as a composer. It was clear from the onset that Matsushita regards Japanese folk music as special, saying that it has “a unique structure only found in Japan,” and even going as far to say that “it is a treasure.”⁴⁶ It is not necessarily his appreciation of *minyō* that he considers a strength, but rather his understanding of the specific characteristics found in Japanese folk music. His admiration for Japanese folk music became strengthened when he left Japan to study in Hungary, and he wondered if there would be an effective method

⁴⁶ Ko Matsushita, interview by author, Tokyo, December 23, 2019.

for him to compose contemporary choral music based on *minyō*. Matsushita describes how he came to an epiphany on how to incorporate his passion for Japanese folk music in his own compositions.

“Then at that moment, I found myself extremely lucky to be in Hungary, the country of Bartók. Bartók had collected many Hungarian folksongs, and it helped him create his own unique style. Rather than composing in a traditional European style, he found ways to let the pentatonic nature of Hungarian folksongs live through his music. From there, I studied Bartók’s style. Since Japan is also a pentatonic country, I could approach arranging Japanese folk music in a similar method. That is what I think I am good at.”⁴⁷

Matsushita claims studying Bartók had a significant influence on his compositional style, especially regarding the incorporation of Japanese folk music in his compositions. He also credits Kodály and Japanese composers such as Akira Miyoshi and Saburo Takata, stating, “Akira Miyoshi is my teacher of style. Saburo Takata is my teacher of sacred music.”⁴⁸

While Matsushita’s compositional output is vast and varied, his contributions to *minyō*-based choral works are significant in the Japanese choral community. This is evidenced by the frequency of his compositions that are performed by choirs at the JCA

⁴⁷ Matsushita, interview by author.

⁴⁸ Sacred music is another pillar of Matsushita’s compositional output. In 2007, he converted from Buddhism to Catholicism. Through our conversation, it was apparent how important it is for him to have the ability to express his faith through compositions.

Concours competitions. In 2018 alone, out of the 151 performances of a composition by Matsushita, thirty were performances of pieces based in Japanese folk music.⁴⁹ Roughly one in five compositions by Matsushita performed during the 2018 JCA Concours were *minyō* based compositions. When asked about what the Japanese choral community does to promote *minyō* choral works, Matsushita revealed that the popularity of folk-based choral music in Japan is a recent phenomenon. According to Matsushita, there was largely a preference towards classical Western European music, and it was not until about ten to fifteen years ago, that *minyō* based choral works became a popular choice for Japanese choirs. The perceived increase of *minyō* based choral music in the Japanese choral community is something that Matsushita delights in.

While the Japanese choral community is vibrant within Japan's borders, accessibility to Japanese-composed music by choirs outside of Japan, notably the USA, can be lacking. Matsushita discussed the challenges of breaking outside of the Japanese choral world to a global community of choral musicians and outlines some of his own journey to establishing international connections. In terms of accessibility of music, Matsushita claims one of the main challenges is how music is copyrighted and published. JASRAC, the main copyright firm for musical arts in Japan, controls the rights to most of the music coming from Japan. When composers submit a piece for publication, the copyright is purchased by JASRAC, and then composers are compensated. The pieces are

⁴⁹ “2018-Nendo (Heisei 30-Nendo • Dai 71 Kai) Zen Nihon Gasshō Konkūru Kentaikai Sanka Dantaito Puroguramu,” Japan Choral Association, accessed December 23, 2021, <https://jcanet.or.jp/event/concour/kako/2018-kentaikai-dantai.htm>.

then published through Japanese publishers that are part of JASRAC's network. It is a rare occurrence that Japanese composers are published through a foreign entity and doing so means having to go around JASRAC. Without an invitation from a foreign publisher, it is difficult to work around the structure of music copyright and publishing that exists in Japan. Matsushita is one of the few Japanese composers with works being published outside of Japan with companies such as Sulasol (Finland) and Carus-Verlag (Germany). The majority of his foreign publications, however, are in his pillar of Latin-based sacred music, as it is a genre of music that he claims, "is something Japanese people don't understand" and has found more success publishing them overseas.

Another challenge Matsushita points out is how the physical publications in Japan differ from the USA and other parts of the West. In the USA, it is common to see pieces published in single octavos—one piece of music equals one publication. In Japan, however, it is common for choral pieces to be published as sets, with each publication containing multiple pieces. Matsushita implies that this standard practice is more accepted by the Japanese choral community, but noted, from an experience he had when he held a booth at an ACDA convention, that American conductors were less willing to pay ten to fifteen dollars for a publication when they might only want one piece for their choirs. This approach to publishing is starting to change in Japan, however, and there are certainly pieces that are published as a single octavo. PDF scores are also becoming more frequently available as well during this time.

In addition to these challenges, there is often a perceived language barrier. There are not a lot of Japanese composers that speak English, and conversely, there are not a lot

of non-Japanese choral conductors who can speak Japanese. Matsushita has observed that there is a perception in the West that the Japanese language is too difficult. He then notes, however, that Japanese sounds are conducive to choral singing. For example, the five vowels spoken in Japanese: [a], [i], [u], [e], [o], are generally pure without any diphthongs. Clusters of consonants are also rare due to the syllabic nature of the Japanese alphabet in which consonants are paired with a vowel (i.e. “*ka, ki, ku, ke, ko*”). These features of the Japanese language, while possibly foreign to Western choral musicians, are arguably easier to replicate to non-speakers in comparison to other languages such as French or German.

Unfortunately, another hurdle to making Japanese pieces accessible through publication is the lack of Romanized transliteration. In our interview, Matsushita states that he is the only composer he knows that uses Romanized transliterations of Japanese in his pieces, and how it is necessary it is to branch out to Western choirs if they cannot read Japanese. My own experience singing Japanese choral works through my upbringing in an international school in Tokyo, affirms that most of the Japanese pieces we sang in my school choir did not provide Romanized transliterations of Japanese text. Matsushita does, however, make strong efforts to make his pieces in Japanese accessible to non-Japanese choirs by not only providing transliterations but also text translations and cultural context.

Matsushita is also a firm believer in composing music at various levels of accessibility and ability. This includes his pillar of more popular styled music geared for school and community choirs with pieces such as “*Shinjiru*” (2004) and “*Ima Kokoni*”

(2011), which lean towards what Matsushita would say have a “pop” feeling. In the interview, what became apparent was Matsushita’s intent to deliver music to be enjoyed by the singer. By writing music for a variety of age levels, abilities, genres, and languages, Matsushita broadens the potential reach of his music.

Matsushita understands that different directors and singers possess different musical tastes. He argues that having a variety of musical options is beneficial to choirs. On a grander scheme, variety in programming has a positive effect in the promotion of Japanese choral works as well. If choirs in the West take a more universal approach to programming that represents a diverse range of repertoire with representation spanning the globe and various eras, then the inclusion of pieces by Japanese composers and *minyō* based choral pieces will be more likely to happen. In our interview he states, “I think it is good to have a variety of fun things. And in that [variety], those Japanese songs will get more performed in America and Europe, and if they become popular pieces, everyone will get to know [Japanese music] a little bit better.”⁵⁰

Compositional Style and Influences

As mentioned in the interview, Matsushita credits his graduate studies in Hungary as a major influence in his compositional style and specifically names Bartók as an inspirational figure for his methodology of marrying pentatonic folk songs with classical

⁵⁰ Matsushita, interview by author.

music.⁵¹ Matsushita uses similar techniques as Bartók, such as tritone substitutions, and states that he uses an axis system in his folk-based pieces.⁵² He cites Akira Miyoshi as being his “teacher of style.” Miyoshi studied composition with Raymond Gallois-Montbrun at the Paris Conservatoire in the mid 1950s.⁵³ Like Matsushita, Miyoshi’s works often blended Western elements of composition with Japanese ones. For example, his technique of motif transformation evoked “the incremental rhythms of Japanese traditional music.”⁵⁴ The atonal melodies found in some of his vocal works, such as *Kogen-dansho*, *En blanc*, and *Duel*, follow the “verbal intonation of Japanese,” and his works for chorus and orchestra combine atonal elements with Japanese children’s songs.⁵⁵ Miyoshi’s influence can be seen in Matsushita’s modern use of tonality and his use of motivic development. This is particularly true regarding using rhythmic elements of Japanese folk music as a foundation for musical ideas, which is observed easily in “Tsugaru Jongara-bushi” and “Yukamuli Uta.” Miyoshi along with Michio Mamiya, who

⁵¹ It would be remiss to not credit the ethnomusicological work of Fumio Koizumi as a significant influence. Koizumi’s tetrachord methodology for analysis of Japanese pentatonic scales is a foundational aspect to Matsushita’s arrangements of Japanese folk songs. Japanese scales, and specifically Koizumi’s tetrachord method will be discussed in further detail in Chapter Four.

⁵² Ko Matsushita, “Distinction of Japanese Native Sound Formation and Attempt of Fusing with Choral Music,” *Exclusivity and coexistence: the 5th International Symposium, Folklore, Music, Work of Art*, 1997, 189–190.

⁵³ Yoko Narazaki, “Miyoshi, Akira,” *Grove Music Online*, 2001 <https://doi.org/mutex.gmu.edu/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.18810>.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

overtly used Japanese folk fragments in his compositions, are examples of the stylistic hybridity that can be found in Japanese classical music.

Matsushita's personal beliefs on Japanese choral music appear to be aligned with this hybrid concept—Japanese folk music coexisting with contemporary choral composition. He emphasizes that creating an artistic arrangement of a Japanese folk song is an avenue of keeping a sung folk tradition alive through “dynamic preservation.”⁵⁶ In his article, “Distinction of Japanese Native Sound Formation and Attempt of Fusing with Choral Music” published in 1997, Matsushita elaborates on his views regarding the collaborative relationship between artistic arrangements and preservation of folk music.

He states:

“Ethnomusicology serves to keep data of the perishing folk music, in which credibility of the original form is an important theme. But we composers must consider from the viewpoint of ‘dynamic preservation,’ how the music will survive, not just as a data. I mean, it is the task of composers to preserve the music which is already separated from the people's life, by means of artistical arrangement, or by giving it ‘universality’ that I mentioned earlier. In this way the music will be performed longer as an artistic piece, although it may not be in the same manner directly linked to the people's life as the folk songs used to be. Performance is the important key here. Live performance in which players and audience share the breath and body feeling of the music, is essentially different from what we hear or see-through compact discs or books. The crucial importance

⁵⁶ Ko Matsushita, “Distinction of Japanese Native Sound Formation and Attempt of Fusing with Choral Music,” *Exclusivity and coexistence: the 5th International Symposium, Folklore, Music, Work of Art*, 1997, 189–190.

of body feeling does not change in the original form of folk songs or in the revised form of artistical pieces.”⁵⁷

Matsushita stresses the importance of not losing the “body feeling” or the character of the folk song when creating an artistic arrangement, a point he reiterated in our interview. This philosophy is exemplified by his arrangements of Japanese folk songs through the following observations: preservation of melody, harmonic growth, adherence to rhythmic structures, form, and other performance-oriented features such as body percussion and aleatoricism. Within his arrangements, there is a trend to allow the melody to be first presented unaltered in its entirety, followed by a pattern of growing harmonic complexity. Openings of pieces tend to adhere to the pentatonic scales and tetrachords first, and then later add in non-scalar pitches. He will add borrowed harmonies such as chromatic mediant and even describes some of his harmonies as “jazzy.”⁵⁸

⁵⁷ Ibid; Matsushita’s use of the word, “universality,” poses a problematic implication based in a musical philosophy rooted in colonialism. That philosophy being that because the music is non-Western, that it is automatically viewed as an “other” or at worse even less than. In chapters 3–5 in *The Study of Ethnomusicology* by Bruno Nettl, Nettl discusses how viewing musics through the lens of universals can be helpful in “examining various hypotheses about the origin of music.” However, he continues to state how “what is most important...about the music of the world is its varieties, the fact that it consists of ‘musics,’ rather than its universals.” I do not believe that Matsushita’s intent with this choice of verbiage was to undermine the uniqueness of *minyō*. I understand its context to refer to Matsushita’s intention in sharing Japanese folksong traditions with musicians, scholars, and audiences outside of Japan. My understanding of Matsushita’s statement is that “dynamic preservation” serves as a vehicle for expressing the uniqueness of Japanese *minyō* within Japan and abroad. In other words, to think of music as a “cultural universal” rather than a “universal language” (Nettl, 69).

⁵⁸ Ko Matsushita, interview by author, Tokyo, December 23, 2019.

Rhythm and meter tend to adhere to characteristics of the original folk song, with some exceptions. For example, *Oiwake* style folk songs, which are typically free of meter, are notated by Matsushita to be modulating in meter—something he does to achieve the feeling of a free meter. On the other hand, *Yagibushi* style pieces retain a strict rhythmic component and strong sense of beat.⁵⁹

In terms of form, Matsushita tends to match the verse and chorus structure of folk music, although there are pieces where he will rearrange verses such as “Aizu Bandaisan” and “Itsuki no Komori Uta.” Many of his arrangements are in a pattern of ABA’, with the B section being a contrasting and typically dissonant section. Examples include “Tsugaru Jongara-bushi”, “Yukamuli Uta,” and “Kotoba-asobi Uta.” The dissonant middle section can function as a vehicle for modulation, as is the case in “Tsugaru Jongara-bushi”, “Yukamuli Uta,” “Itsuki no Komori Uta,” and “Aizu Bandaisan.” When asked about this, Matsushita responded by saying he wishes to create contrast within his pieces to keep them interesting. Whether intentional or not, this causes some of pieces have a *Jo-ha-kyū* aesthetic, a Japanese art aesthetic that is segmented into three large parts: *Jo* (preface), *ha* (break), and *kyū* (rapid).⁶⁰ *Jo-ha-kyū* will be discussed further in Chapter Four. Matsushita’s approach to form may also reflect his being inspired by Bartók’s prevalence of Fibonacci segmentation.

⁵⁹ For more detailed information about *Oiwake* and *Yagibushi* styles, see Chapter 4, Rhythmic Styles.

⁶⁰ For more information on *Jo-ha-kyū*, see Chapter 4, Form.

He is a performance-oriented composer and notates performance features such as the use of body percussion in “Yukamuli Uta” and aleatoricism in “Kotoba-asobi Uta” that can be viewed as enhancing the character of the piece. In the case of “Yukamuli Uta,” the body percussion resembles the sounds of the *hishaku* (wooden ladle with shorthand) splashing against the top of the water of the *onsen* (hot springs). The aleatoric section in “Kotoba-asobi Uta” highlights the aspect of play found in the arrangement of Japanese word play songs. Both examples are used in their respective pieces to reinforce the “body feeling” of the original folk material.

Some aspects of his compositional choices are determined by his contemporaries, and this is often seen in his choice of voicings. Matsushita is a highly commissioned composer, and many of his pieces are created with the commissioning organization’s voices in mind, and he is not afraid to use the full range of any choir. For example, the alto writing in “Itsuki no Komori Uta” containing low D’s and in “Aizu Bandaisan” there are low Eb. If voices are capable, he does not shy away from testing out the extensions of each voice part. He is intentional in his choices for voicing, a tenet of his aforementioned belief in writing music for a variety of ability levels.

The factors listed above contribute to his overall approach to compositions based on Japanese folk music. His influences comprise people from both Japan and Hungary, notably Bartok, whom he credits as providing examples on how to marry pentatonic scales with contemporary compositions. Matsushita aims to keep Japanese folk songs present in the public’s ear through artistic arrangements that embody the character of the traditional music.

CHAPTER FOUR: ELEMENTS OF JAPANESE FOLK MUSIC

Matsushita emphasizes the importance of preserving the character of Japanese folk music when creating an artistic choral arrangement. That is not to say that he, or other composers of this style, feel bound to traditional sounds, but rather focus on writing arrangements that do not obscure the traditional folk song elements. Matsushita's focus is to marry the traditional with the modern performance practice of current choral singing so that the elements of Japanese folk music, still shine through the composition. Japanese folk music is full of its own unique techniques, performance practices, compositional styles, musical scales, harmonization, and history, and there are already many scholarly resources on this subject that go into great depth and detail about each trait. For the purposes of this study, the following distinct traits of Japanese folk music will be broadly discussed: types of folk songs, scales, rhythmic styles, form, and vocal elements in Japanese folk music and art.

Folk Song Typology

Folk song type is determined by a folk song's origin and function, and Matsushita takes that into consideration the folk song's type when composing a *minyō* choral arrangement. For example, songs sung and danced to at *Obon* are often referred to as *bon-odori*. Folk song types carry their own musical characteristics, which often correspond to a certain style of Japanese folk song, like *Oiwake* and *Yagibushi*. *Oiwake* style is a rhythmically free and soloistic melismatic style that is often associated with country song types like *Michi Uta* (Road/Path Songs), while the strong rhythmic

emphasis in *Yagibushi* style is often associated with *Waza Uta* (Work Songs).⁶¹ These categories cited are not mutually exclusive, and there are many methods to define the categorization of folk song type and styles developed by scholars of Japanese traditional music.

In *Nihon Minyō Daijiten*, Kenji Asano discusses two methods of categorization by *shamisen* player and ethnomusicologist, Kasho Machida, and folk scholar, Kunio Yanagita.⁶² Yanagita proposes 10 categories for Japanese folk songs (Table 1) while Machida's method holds 12. Within each of these categories there are further subtypes. Yanagita creates distinction by location or what setting the folk song would be sung.⁶³ This easily allows for associating an origin and a function for many folk songs, which are inherent qualities of the character of a folk song.

⁶¹ Kishimoto, 37–39.

⁶² Asano, *Nihon Minyō Daijiten*, 4–6.

⁶³ Asano, 5.

Table 1: Yanagita's Categorization of Japanese Folk Songs⁶⁴

Folk Song Type		Definition
1.	<i>Ta Uta</i> (Field Songs)	Songs associated with rice planting, harvesting, and other farming activities.
2.	<i>Niwa Uta</i> (Garden Songs)	Songs associated with the household chores: Rice threshing, barley flailing, milling, silk/thread spinning, ground leveling.
3.	<i>Yama Uta</i> (Mountain Songs)	Songs that came out of forested mountainous areas. Includes the woods, plains, and fields surrounding the area as well: Tree cutting, Tea growing, Hiking, Mowing.
4.	<i>Umi Uta</i> (Ocean Songs)	Songs from coastal regions and activities on the water. Includes boating songs, shellfish gathering songs, seaweed gathering songs, and fishing songs.
5.	<i>Waza Uta</i> (Work Songs)	Singing that involves people of a certain profession. Examples include: Construction, oil pressing, <i>sake</i> brewing, tea roasting, and lumber.
6.	<i>Michi Uta</i> (Road/Path Songs)	Songs about traveling: Horseback riding, cattle driving, palanquin bearing, hauling/carrying.
7.	<i>Hogi Uta</i> (Celebration Songs)	Songs for celebrating: Wedding songs, drinking songs, <i>Zashiki</i> Songs (Songs sung at a banquet), etc.
8.	<i>Matsuri Uta</i> (Festival Songs)	Songs for religious festivals: <i>Miyairi</i> (Shrine Entering) Songs, <i>Kamimukae</i> (God greeting) Songs, <i>Kamioku</i> (God sending) Songs.
9.	<i>Asobi Uta</i> (Recreation Songs)	Songs for recreational and ritual gatherings: Dance songs, <i>bon odori</i> songs, <i>Ta Asobi</i> (Rice Field Ritual) Songs, <i>Torioi</i> Songs (A song sung at New Year's Celebrations), etc.
10.	<i>Warabe Uta</i> (Children's Songs)	Songs for children: Lullabies, game songs, <i>Otedama</i> (Small bean bag game) songs, etc.

⁶⁴ Asano, 5–6.

Yanagita's typology serves as a basis for most subsequent categorization methods by more recent scholars, including Machida.⁶⁵ Asano notes, however, that Yanagita's method can be at times ambiguous. For example, it can be difficult to distinguish whether a *Funa Uta* (boating song) that takes place on a river would be considered an *Umi Uta* (ocean song), since it deals with water, or a *Michi Uta* (road/path song), as it deals with inland travel.⁶⁶ Machida attempts to resolve this by expanding Yanagita's method and further subdividing folk song types by industry or activity rather than solely on location.

Typology of Japanese folk song remains at times ambiguous but provides important insight on the origins and purposes of a given folk song. Matsushita does not identify one particular method, but it is clear that Matsushita considers folk song type when composing Japanese folk arrangements. This is evident in his use of text painting, arrangement for voices (i.e., Children's Choir, Men's Choir, Women's Choir, Mixed Ensemble), rhythm, and body percussion. Matsushita's folk song arrangements can be viewed as being programmatic, composed with the intent of creating an image of a setting or activity that corresponds with the folk song's origins.

Scales

Regardless of type, most Japanese folk music is pentatonic and incorporates different scales, or modes. Unlike *gagaku* (Japanese court music), there is no formalized theory of Japanese folk music, and all currently used terminology and analyses regarding

⁶⁵ Hughes, 17.

⁶⁶ Asano, 6.

scales originates from ethnomusicologists and music theorists.⁶⁷ There have been multiple scholars who have studied the architecture of these pentatonic scales, but the most widely accepted theory of Japanese folk scales was developed by Japanese ethnomusicologist, Fumio Koizumi.⁶⁸ It should be noted that Matsushita recognizes Koizumi’s method when discussing Japanese folk music.⁶⁹ Koizumi analyzes the scales through two three note disjunct tetrachords that span an octave (Figure 1),⁷⁰ and he identifies four types of tetrachords that are prevalent in Japanese folk music.⁷¹

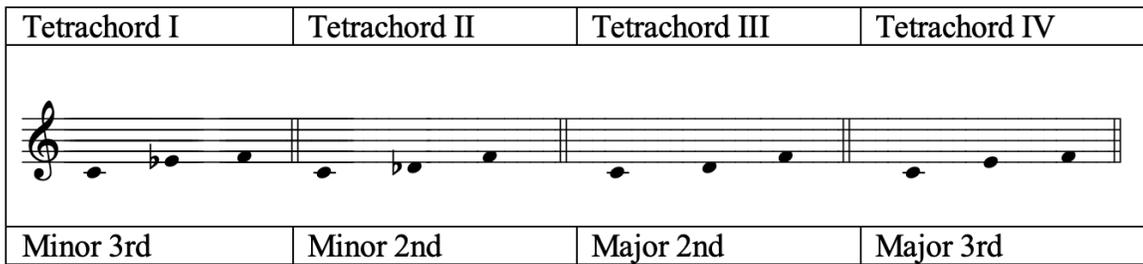


Figure 1: The four tetrachords in Japanese Folk Music as identified by Fumio Koizumi.

⁶⁷ Hughes, 35.

⁶⁸ Hughes, 35.

⁶⁹ Matsushita, “Distinction of Japanese Native Sound Formation and Attempt of Fusing with Choral Music,” 191.

⁷⁰ Hughes, 35.

⁷¹ Koizumi, *Nihon no Oto*, 302.

Each tetrachord spans a perfect fourth, and the quality of the tetrachord is determined by the middle note.⁷² The notes that are a fourth apart are referred by Koizumi in his research as *kakuon* (nuclear tones).⁷³ The quality of the tetrachord is determined by the interval from the base note to the middle note or infix.⁷⁴ Tetrachord I holds a minor 3rd, Tetrachord II holds a minor 2nd, Tetrachord III holds a major 2nd, and Tetrachord IV holds a major 3rd. Scales are created by placing two disjunct tetrachords of the same quality together to span an octave. Through this method, he outlines four primary scales used in Japanese folk songs: *Minyō* Scale, *Miyakobushi* Scale, *Ryūkyū* Scale, and *Ritsu* Scale.⁷⁵

⁷² Ibid, 300–304.

⁷³ Ibid, 300.

⁷⁴ Hughes, 36.

⁷⁵ Koizumi, *Nihon no Oto*, 308.

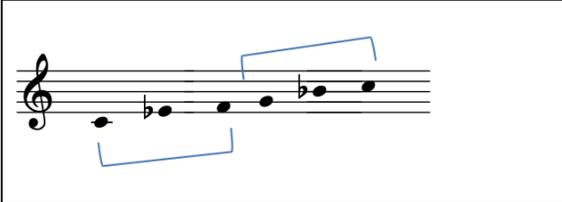
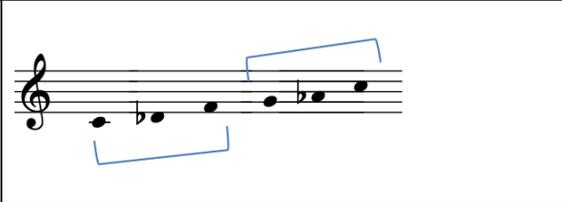
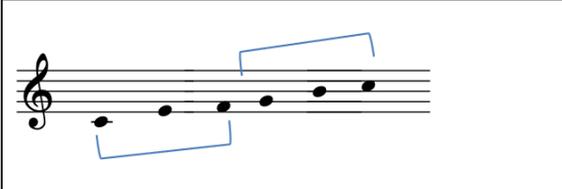
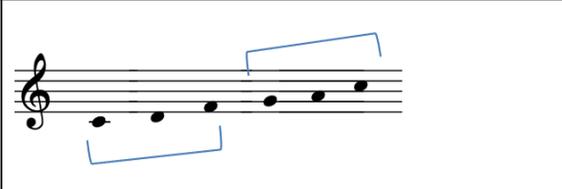
	
<i>Minyō</i> Scale: Tetrachord I	<i>Miyakobushi</i> Scale: Tetrachord II
	
<i>Ryūkyū</i> Scale: Tetrachord IV	<i>Ritsu</i> Scale: Tetrachord III

Figure 2: Japanese Folk Scales as outlined by Koizumi

Koizumi’s tetrachord method of scales fits virtually all Japanese folk music, and although there are some limitations, it is widely accepted by music scholars. It should be noted that not all folk songs in Japan follow these scales strictly, with many *minyō* performers singing non-phonemic pitches through deviation and ornamentation. Some songs combine or borrow tetrachords from other scales, which is quite common in *shamisen* music from the Tsugaru region of Aomori Prefecture.⁷⁶ For these reasons, Hughes refers to some *minyō* songs as being “pentacentric,” rather than strictly pentatonic, and notes that Koizumi’s model is an “idealization” or “approximation” of *minyō* scale structures.⁷⁷ This does not diminish the practical applications of Koizumi’s

⁷⁶ Hughes, 37.

⁷⁷ Ibid, 37–39.

method of studying *minyō* songs, however. These concepts are defined by music scholars, not necessarily *minyō* performers who maintain the traditions of Japanese folk music.⁷⁸

Another scale that is commonly used in newer forms of Japanese folk music is the *yonanuki* scale, which originated from the Meiji Era (1868-1912). The *yonanuki* scale literally translates to “the fourth and seventh removed,” and is a musical example of Japan’s Westernization during the Meiji Era. The scale is a Japanese pentatonic scale that is overlaid with Western music’s harmonic functions. With the *yonanuki* scale, there is a clear Tonic and Dominant. Koizumi discusses the modal connection of the *yonanuki* scale with the *minyō* and *ritsu* scales. Using solfege syllables in his analysis, he sees the *minyō* scale being “la” based and the *ritsu* scale as “sol” based, while the Major *yonanuki* scale is based in “do” and “sol.”⁷⁹ The scales use the same pitches but have a different starting place to create two different modes, which is illustrated in the figure below. While the *yonanuki* scale is considered by Koizumi as Japanese folk scale, it is typically associated with modern folk music genres, most notably *enka*.⁸⁰

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Koizumi, 324.

⁸⁰ Koizumi, 320–26; *Enka* is a genre of Japanese popular music that evokes traditional and folk imagery while being a modernized musical art form. Songs of *Enka* will often use a combination of Western instruments such as bass, drums, guitar, piano with traditional instruments such as shakuhachi, koto, and shamisen. *Enka* gained immense popularity in the 1960’s.

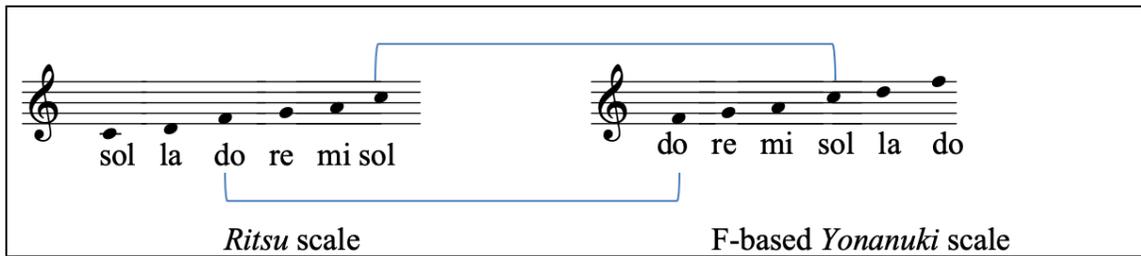


Figure 3: Relationship between *Ritsu* and *Yonanuki* scales.

Koizumi’s tetrachord method of scale analysis can be applied to other pentatonic or “pentacentric” musical traditions. Matsushita talks about how this can be applied to Hungarian folk music and discusses how this approach can reframe the research and works of Kodaly and Bartok.⁸¹ One of the more practical applications of Koizumi’s method is the architecture of the scales being constructed on perfect fourths. Matsushita often capitalizes on this concept in his arrangements of Japanese folk songs through his use of quartal and quintal harmony which is demonstrated in Figure 4.

⁸¹ Matsushita, “Distinction of Japanese Native Sound Formation and Attempt of Fusing with Choral Music,” 190.

59

p

べろべろの かみさまは
Be-ro-be-ro no Ka-mi-sa-ma wa

P4

べ べろべろろ べろべろべろろ
be be-ro be-ro-ro be-ro be-ro be-ro-ro

P4

べ べろべろろ べろべろべろろ
be be-ro be-ro-ro be-ro be-ro be-ro-ro

Ko Matsushita KOTOBA-ASOBI UTA
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Figure 4: Example of quartal based harmony in "Kotoba-asobi Uta," mm 59–60.

Open perfect intervals are a simple way to harmonize a pentatonic folk melody, and Matsushita will typically do this when initially harmonizing the folksong, before venturing into more complex harmonies like non-scalar tones, dissonances, tritones, and borrowed chords. This common trend is observed in the five pieces selected for analysis in this study.

Rhythmic Styles

There are two main rhythmic styles that Koizumi observes in his studies of Japanese folk music: *Oiwake* and *Yagibushi*.⁸² *Oiwake* style is defined as free of meter and highly melismatic, while *Yagibushi* style is metered, possessing an emphasized

⁸² Hughes, 26.

pulse.⁸³ *Oiwake* style is also associated to be soloistic while *Yagibushi* style tends to adhere towards *minyō* that were intended for group singing. These two rhythmic styles as defined by Koizumi, who named them after two Japanese folksongs of the same name, “Esashi *Oiwake*” and “*Yagibushi*,” are widely recognized by musicians and scholars studying *minyō*.

Matsushita observes these concepts and adds a further style of metered music in Japanese folk songs by analyzing subdivisions within a beat. He observes that some folk song types possess distinct rhythmic characteristics, particularly *Umi Uta* (Ocean Songs). Matsushita describes this rhythmic style as *Kaiyōminteki* (Seafaring People’s Species), which is his term used to describe the folk music of people who either work or live by the ocean such as songs about fishing, shellfish gathering, or seaweed harvesting.⁸⁴ Although typically applying to *Umi Uta*, *Kaiyōminteki* also encompasses other folk song types that originate from people’s living in coastal areas. Stylistically, *Kaiyōminteki* songs are characterized by a dotted subdivision of the beat where the first subdivision is longer in duration than the second. This contrasts with inland folk songs that tend to have a more even subdivision of beat, or an opposite subdivision of beat where the first subdivision is shorter in duration than the second.

⁸³ Hughes, 26; While *Oiwake* style is often identified as being melismatic, Hughes notes that there are many folksongs in *Yagibushi* style that are also highly melismatic.

⁸⁴ Ko Matsushita, interview by author, Tokyo, December 23, 2019.

	
Example of <i>Kaiyōminteki</i> rhythm	Examples of regular <i>Yagibushi</i> or inland rhythms

Figure 5: Examples of *Kaiyōminteki* and *Yagibushi* Rhythms

In a regular *Yagibushi* style, the beat is subdivided evenly, and in *Kaiyōminteki* style the beat is divided unevenly. This uneven subdivision of the beat does not necessarily observe a strict durational value as shown in the figure above. While there is no traditional terminology for this type of subdivision, Hughes describes how the uneven subdivision can be thought of as having “swing,” or *hazumu*.⁸⁵ The “swing” can be expressed as dotted rhythmic patterns, syncopation, or as compound meter. The main characteristic of the “swing,” according to Hughes, and *Kaiyōminteki*, according to Matsushita, is the division of the pulse as a “long-short” pattern.⁸⁶

Metered Japanese folk songs are largely duple, either in a simple or compound meter.⁸⁷ There are a few exceptions, however, such as “*Itsuki no Komori Uta*,” that are in triple meter, but they are rare. In addition, some of these folk songs now commonly known in a triple meter may be the result of a Western influenced adaptation despite possibly being non-metered in its original form, as is the case with “*Itsuki no Komori*

⁸⁵ Hughes, 26.

⁸⁶ Hughes, 27; Ko Matsushita, interview by author.

⁸⁷ Hughes, 26.

Uta”.⁸⁸ There are also instances in Japanese folk song where the meter can be unclear due to a lack of weak and strong beats, which is more prominent in *tsugaru-jamisen* music.⁸⁹ Hughes notes that some Tsugaru folk songs, such as “Tsugaru Yosare Bushi,” “contains three beats of unequal duration, often with agogic and/or dynamic accent on an off-beat,” making them possible candidates for a triple meter consideration.⁹⁰ Matsushita incorporates this rhythmic idea in the end of his arrangement of “Tsugaru Jongara-bushi”, where in a measure of 4/4 time signature, he divides the measure in three uneven beats (i.e. dotted quarter note – dotted quarter note – quarter note) rather than two or four even beats.

Form

In terms of form, Japanese folk songs are typically strophic and will follow a poetic meter of some kind in the lyrics. Since Japanese is a syllabic language, the syllabic structure of folk songs is significant in the delivery and transference of text. One of the most common syllabic patterns is called *dodoitsu*, which follows a pattern of 7-7-7-5, totaling twenty-six syllables per verse.⁹¹ The term *dodoitsu* is taken from a popular song form that came into prominence and spread across Japan during the nineteenth century, and the form is still quite common in new *minyō*, folk songs composed in the twentieth

⁸⁸ Hughes, 29.

⁸⁹ McGoldrick, “The *Tsugaru-Jamisen*: Its Origins, Construction, and Music,” 67.

⁹⁰ Hughes, 28.

⁹¹ Hughes, 33.

century to present day.⁹² The prevalence of *dodoitsu* meter allowed folk songs to more easily travel across Japan, and locals would often improvise or compose new verses to adapt a folk song for their own purposes.⁹³ There are other syllabic patterns for verse structures such as 7-7 (i.e. “Tsugaru Jongara-bushi”) and 7-5 (i.e. “Ohara Bushi”).⁹⁴

An important aspect of Japanese traditional art forms is *Jo-ha-kyū*. *Jo-ha-kyū* is a three phased structural aesthetic found in Japanese art, drama, literature, and music.⁹⁵ It is commonly associated with Noh drama and is considered to be the “grammar of the art form.”⁹⁶ The fourteenth-century Noh playwright, Zeami, outlined a five play pattern in which the first play would be the *Jo*, the middle three would be the *Ha*, and the final would be the *Kyū*.⁹⁷ It is not uncommon to find similar structures in lyrics and in music. The three phases of *Jo-ha-kyū* are:

1. *Jo* (preface): an introductory section “characterized by a dignified, stately rhythm and mood.”⁹⁸

⁹² Asano, 357, 165.

⁹³ Hughes, 33.

⁹⁴ Groemer, 113.

⁹⁵ Koizumi, 352.

⁹⁶ Noriko Reider, “Akira Kurosawa’s *Dreams*, as seen through the principles of classical Japanese literature and performing art,” *Japan Forum* 17, no. 2 (2005): 266, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09555800500118271>.

⁹⁷ Koizumi, 352.

⁹⁸ Reider, 266.

2. *Ha* (break): a developmental section where “movement becomes central” and tension is built.⁹⁹
3. *Kyū* (rapid): a final section with fast movement and “brisk rhythm.”¹⁰⁰

It is not clear if Matsushita consciously composes his Japanese folk song arrangements with *Jo-ha-kyū* in mind, but there is a clear pattern found in his arrangements, which often include an introductory exposition section, a developmental middle section with strong harmonic dissonance and changes to tempo, and a final section that increases inertia either rhythmically or harmonically to the end of the piece. When interviewed, Matsushita stated that he likes to create contrast within his compositions, which is usually expressed by a middle section that is harmonically unstable. The harmonic instability could be viewed as the “break” within *Jo-ha-kyū*, and all five pieces for analysis in this study exhibit a middle section that “breaks” harmonically.

While Matsushita has not cited *Jo-ha-kyū* as a guide to form in his compositions, there are traits of the aesthetic within his music. One structural concept he has discussed is the Fibonacci sequence and the Golden Ratio.¹⁰¹ The two concepts can reside concurrently within a piece and complement each other. For example, the *Kyū* may happen to occur at a point in the music that is close to matching the proportions of the

⁹⁹ Koizumi, 352.

¹⁰⁰ Koizumi, 352; Reider, 266.

¹⁰¹ Matsushita, “Distinction of Japanese Native Sound Formation and Attempt of Fusing with Choral Music,” 193.

Golden Ratio. The two concepts are not dependent on each other but can be correlated. It may also be the case that the principles of *Jo-ha-kyū* are embedded into the folksong itself, as will be further discussed in the analysis of “Tsugaru Jongara-bushi.” The aesthetic of *Jo-ha-kyū* may simply present in Matsushita’s *minyō*-based works due to his adherence to preserving the character of traditional folksongs.

Vocal Elements

Japanese folksongs employ a range of vocal elements and ornamentations, namely *hayashi*, *kakegoe*, and *kobushi*. These vocal elements can embody a structural role, as is the case with *hayashi*, which are nonsensical vocables that are either sung in between verses or as part of a verse.¹⁰² *Hayashi* in group singing is typically sung as a response to the lead singer’s melody.¹⁰³ A great example of *hayashi* can be seen in “Yukamuli Uta,” in which the vocable, “*yare*,” is used as an introductory device that precedes each verse. Matsushita, in his arrangement of “Yukamuli Uta,” uses the *hayashi* throughout the entire piece, and segments each verse with an interlude-like section based solely on the *hayashi* of the folk song, bringing the distinctive element to the forefront. Many Japanese folk songs are identified by their *hayashi*, and some are even named after it, such as “Hōhai Bushi.”¹⁰⁴

¹⁰² Hughes, 33.

¹⁰³ Hughes, 30.

¹⁰⁴ Groemer, 112.

Kekegoe is another type of nonsensical vocable but is used often in a preparatory function. For example, in *tsugaru-jamisen* music, the player will shout a quick “*ha*” or “*hai*” as a “preparatory beat at the beginning of a *shamisen* piece.”¹⁰⁵ An example of an extended *kekegoe* can be found in “Aizu Bandaisan,” where each verse is preceded by a long “*iya*.” *Kekegoe* in a live performance setting may be used to indicate to the ensemble the start of a new section within the song.¹⁰⁶ *Kekegoe* and *hayashi* are both vocal and textural characteristics that are distinctly associated with Japanese folk song.

Ornamentation is a common practice in performing Japanese folk song. Japanese folk singers often will extend the melody with *kobushi*, an ornamentation that elaborates on the melody horizontally.¹⁰⁷ *Kobushi* are melismatic gestures that expand upon an existing melody, and some *kobushi* figures can be very long, especially in *Oiwake* style of *minyō*, which is defined by the extensive use of *kobushi*. Matsushita uses this element in his Japanese folk arrangements but will notate the figures of ornamentation rather than leaving it free for the singers’ interpretations. The *kobushi*-like figures he uses, however, are perfect tools to convey the character of the singing style found in Japanese folk music.

¹⁰⁵ Groemer, 112.

¹⁰⁶ Groemer, 112.

¹⁰⁷ Hughes, 31.

Summary

Possessing general knowledge of these musical concepts within Japanese folk songs is crucial to understanding Matsushita's intentions in his *minyō*-based choral works, and can be summarized as follows:

The most widely accepted typology of Japanese folk songs comes from Yanagita, who devised his method by observing the functions for which the folksong is associated with. The ten categories he observes are: *Ta Uta* (Field Songs), *Niwa Uta* (Garden Songs), *Yama Uta* (Mountain Songs), *Umi Uta* (Ocean Songs), *Waza Uta* (Work Songs), *Michi Uta* (Road/Path Songs), *Hogi Uta* (Celebration Songs), *Matsuri Uta* (Festival Songs), *Asobi Uta* (Recreation Songs), and *Warabe Uta* (Children's Songs).

The four scales recognized in folk songs through Koizumi's theory of tetrachord scalar analysis are the *Minyō* scale, *Miyakobushi* scale, *Ritsu* scale, and *Ryūkyū* scale. Koizumi's method divides each scale into sets of two disjunct tetrachords, each spanning a perfect fourth with an infix note determining the tetrachord's quality.

Regarding form and structure, there are a few main factors to consider as it pertains to the selected pieces for analysis. First, the basic form of *minyō* music is strophic and adheres to the syllabic structures of the text. Second, *Dodoitsu*, which holds a 7-7-7-5 syllabic pattern for each verse, is very common in *minyō*. Lastly, the artistic aesthetic of *Jo-ha-kyū* is often observed in various forms of *minyō* as well.

Finally, the vocal elements of *hayashi*, *kakegoe*, and *kobushi* are key characteristics to sung *minyō*. *Hayashi* and *kakegoe* employ nonsensical vocables and carry structural functions such as preparing the ensemble or serving as encouraging

background vocals to the main singer or instrument, while *Kobushi* encompasses a variety of ornamentations and embellishments to an existing melody. These vocal elements are important to a folksong's identity and overall character.

Matsushita's treatment of these folk elements in his *minyō*-based choral works ultimately contributes to the preservation of the folksong's character. This genre of Matsushita's compositional output demonstrates his ability to incorporate traditional forms, styles, and aesthetics into his own artistic expression.

CHAPTER FIVE: ANALYSES OF PIECES

The following analyses will study Matsushita's methodology when composing Japanese folk song arrangements. Each analysis will discuss background information of the folk song such as its history, performance practices, and type or genre of folk song that it fits into. The background will also cover information regarding the arrangements' conceptions and premier performances. The background section will be followed by musical analysis of Matsushita's arrangements which will discuss the topics of sound, harmony, melody, rhythm, text painting, and form. It is here that I will present Matsushita's treatment of Japanese folk songs in his choral works. Following the musical analysis, I will present conducting and rehearsal considerations based on my own personal experience and insight with the piece. Finally, each analysis will end with a text, translation, and pronunciation guide for readers who may be interested in performing the analyzed works.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁸ For the most part, this dissertation follows the phonetic conventions outlined by Haruo Kubozono in *Handbook of Japanese Phonetics and Phonology* (2015), an excellent and comprehensive resource for Japanese diction and language. One key difference, however, is the vowel [e], in which for Japanese lyric diction is opened to [ɛ] as outlined by Margaret Ozaki-Graves in her article, "Japanese Lyric Diction" (2008) published in the *Journal of Singing*. Based on my experience and research, it is my conclusion that in chorally sung Japanese that most choirs sing [ɛ]. For this dissertation, the five vowels will be written in IPA as /a/=[a], /i/=[i], /u/=[u], /e/=[ɛ], /o/=[o]. The /u/ vowel in Japanese is slightly more compressed than [u], which is why [u] is used. Ozaki-Graves also notes that the *o* vowel tends to be slightly more open than [o]. Elongated vowels are represented with a [:], for example *ō*=[o:]. The mora obstruent known as *sokuon* is represented in a double consonant stop segmented by a [:]. For example, *bikkuri* would be phonetically spelled as [bik:kuri].

“Aizu Bandaisan”

Background

While it is written for four voices, “Aizu Bandaisan” is most often performed by a women’s choir. The piece was first published in 1997 in a short set of Japanese folk arrangements by Matsushita titled, *Nihon no Minyō Dai 1 Shū* or *Japanese Folksongs 1 for Equal Voices*. This version was commissioned and premiered by the Wakayama Children’s Choir under the direction of Haruhiko Numamaru.¹⁰⁹ Matsushita later republished another version of the arrangement in *Nihon no Minyō Dai 2 Shū*, which was written for and performed by Brilliant Harmony.¹¹⁰ The second publication contains stark differences from the first, most notably the addition of a secondary octet on top of the original version. The premier dates of both versions are a year apart from each other, the first published version being in March of 1993, and the second being in July of 1994. However, when interviewed about the two versions of the arrangement, Matsushita implied that the second publication was composed first, intending it to be sung by his choir for an upcoming performance at the 16th Bela Bartók International Chorus Competition in Debrecen, Hungary.¹¹¹ If the two are compared side by side, it is clear

¹⁰⁹ Ko Matsushita, *Nihon no Minyō Dai 1* (1997; repr., Tokyo: edition Kawai, 2019).

¹¹⁰ Ko Matsushita, *Nihon no Minyō Dai 2* (2000; repr., Tokyo: edition Kawai, 2019); Brilliant Harmony is a semi-professional choir in Japan that is directed and founded by Matsushita.

¹¹¹ Matsushita, interview by author.

that they are derivative of each other, but the second published version is more complex. For the purposes of this study, both versions will be discussed.

“Aizu Bandaisan” derives its melody from the folk tune of the same name originating in Fukushima Prefecture located in northern part of the main island, Honshu. Fukushima Prefecture is broken up in three main regions: Aizu, Nakadōri, and Hamadōri.

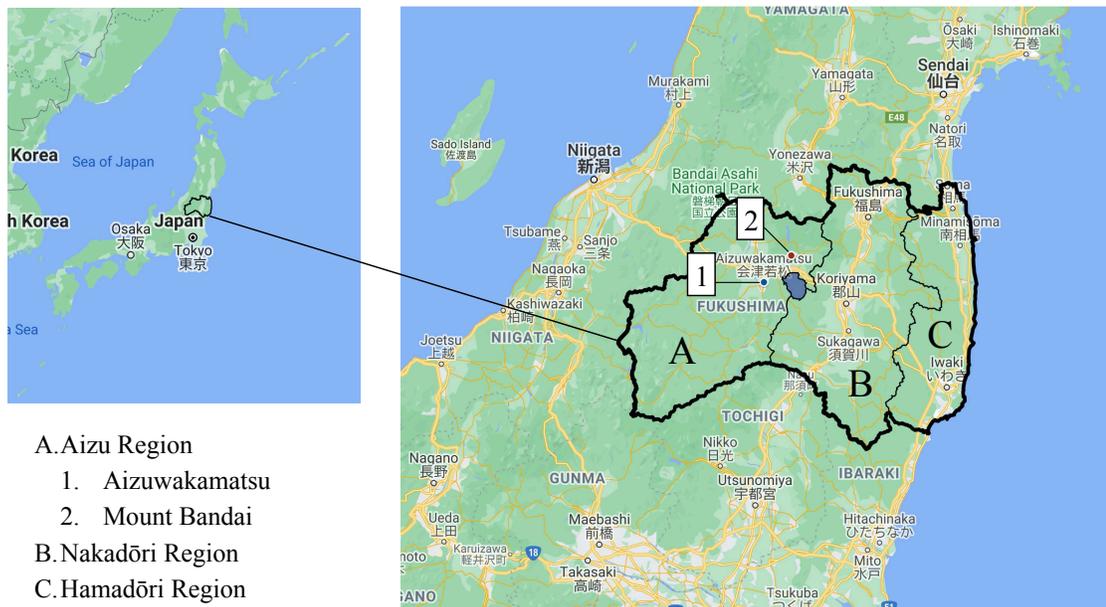


Figure 6: Map of Fukushima Prefecture¹¹²

“Bandaisan” refers to Mount Bandai, a volcanic mountain that has been dubbed as the “Fuji of the North,” although a massive eruption in 1888 altered its original shape. It

¹¹² “Map of Fukushima Prefecture, Japan,” Google Maps, accessed April 30, 2022, <https://www.google.com/maps/d/u/0/edit?mid=121fiL4CsgsKKgwcwIj9xQdeXKD BJh36o&usp=sharing>.

now has a distinct double peak feature whose silhouette is synonymous with the mountain. Aizu is often referred to as a place that “bears the old customs and past ways of life.”¹¹³

The Great East Japan Earthquake and subsequent tsunami and nuclear disaster at the Fukushima Daiichi Plant on March 11, 2011, resulted in a resurgence of performances and expressions of folk traditions from Fukushima prefecture as well as northern Japan.¹¹⁴ People in Japan demonstrated solidarity and empathy in a period of extreme loss and crisis for the people of Fukushima. Ko Matsushita himself led a campaign called, “Sing for Japan,” in which choirs from around the world were invited to sing one of four pieces and donate in a message of support for the people affected by the disaster.¹¹⁵

The folk song is now a popular *Bon odori* song and is sung and danced to during *matsuri* (festivals) during the *Obon* season.¹¹⁶ The tune’s origins date back to the first year of the Meiji Era (1868-1912), when it was brought to Aizuwakamatsu City by oil presser workers, who were from *Gokahama* in Echigo, which is now in the Nishikanbara

¹¹³ Sug-in Kweon, “Politics of furusato in Aizu, Japan: Local identities and metropolitan discourses” (PhD diss., Stanford University, 1994), 124.

¹¹⁴ The Great East Japan Earthquake which occurred on March 11, 2011, was one of Japan’s most devastating natural disasters in the modern era. It was Japan’s largest ever recorded earthquake and resulted in a devastating tsunami which caused massive damage to coastal populations. The earthquake and tsunami also led to the events of the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Disaster.

¹¹⁵ “Sing for Japan”, March 31, 2011, <http://www.thechoirproject.org/sing4japan/>.

¹¹⁶ Asano, *Nihon Minyō Daijiten*, 15.

ward of Niigata prefecture.¹¹⁷ The oil pressers sang and danced along to the folk song near Aidaji Temple in Nanokamachi, where the dance was popularized and spread throughout the city.¹¹⁸ There is a possibility that the folk song they brought over was originally intended as a *waza uta* (work song) meant to lighten the mood of hard work and potentially synchronize movements.¹¹⁹ When the folksong came to the Aizu region, the tune became known as “*Gennyo-bushi*,” and the dance associated with it became known as *Kansho Odori*.¹²⁰ In the local dialect of Aizu, “*kansho*” means craziness or madness, which was a description of the fast-paced dance that involved raising and lowering one’s shoulders.¹²¹

The tune was recorded in 1934 by Kouta Katsutaro, a *geisha* and *ryukoka* singer, with Victor Records under the title “*Aizu Sasayama*.”¹²² The change in title was due to the different lyrics that Katsutaro sang. The addition of the *shamisen*, a three stringed banjo-like instrument, was added as accompaniment to the recording, and has remained a performance element of the piece since. Her rendition became known nationally for its high pitched “*enya*” call, a type of *kakegoe*, and its descriptive text of Mount Bandai,

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Matsushita, interview by author.

¹²⁰ Asano, 15.

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² “Song of Album Aizu Bandai San,” *Yomiuri Shinbun*, July 17, 1983, 26, Yomidas Rekishikan.

calling it a “treasure of a mountain.”¹²³ Eventually, the title of the folk song became known as “Aizu Bandaisan,” after the opening lyrics sung by Katsutaro.¹²⁴

The tune uses the *miyakobushi* scale, which is characterized by starting each tetrachord in the scale with a minor second. For example, in Matsushita’s arrangement, the melody is centered on G, so the scale would be outlined as: [G-A b-C]+[D-E b-G]. The verse structure is in a 7-7-7-5 syllabic pattern, also known in Japan as *dodoitsu* meter, a very common poetic meter in Japanese folk songs.¹²⁵ The first three verses of the tune portray the majesty of Mount Bandai with description of its surroundings and its beauty. The last two shift focus toward the atmosphere of celebration and relaxed country life as the song sings about “dancing to the upper and lower drums” and enjoying the “morning rest, morning sake, and morning soak.”¹²⁶

Analysis

One of the most popular choral arrangements of “Aizu Bandaisan” in the West was written by Japanese conductor Hiroshi Ishimaru.¹²⁷ His arrangement, which was published by Sulasol, has become one of the standards of this folk song and has been

¹²³ Asano, 15.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ Hughes, 33.

¹²⁶ This is my interpreted translation of the text.

¹²⁷ This is the author’s own assessment. This was concluded through the author’s own choral experience and research. For those who may be unfamiliar, there are a myriad of performances that can be found online through sources such as YouTube.

performed by children's choirs around the globe.¹²⁸ He opens his arrangement with a *shamisen*-like fast repeated note figure in the piano before introducing the melody and then harmonizing it. Ishimaru's choral arrangement aligns with how "Aizu Bandaisan" is typically heard, as an upbeat *Bon odori* piece. It is rhythmic and holds a strong sense of beat, and it is easy to hear the character of the *shamisen*, *taiko*, and *fue* being portrayed in the piano accompaniment and in the voices.

Matsushita's arrangement of the tune veers away from this typical treatment but can still be considered as honoring the traditions of the folksong. Instead of a strong upbeat and rhythmic dance, Matsushita's arrangement is generally slow, weighted, and filled with dissonance and cluster chords. He stated in our interview that his reasoning for this was to portray the origins of the tune as a work song. His intent was to create an aural picture of the workers going through the labor-intensive process of making *sake* with snow falling in the background.¹²⁹ In the preface of the score, he writes about the origins of the song being sung by workers expelling oil from rapeseed.¹³⁰ The Aizu region is famous for both industries which require back-breaking work to produce the high-quality reputation of these goods. The interpretation expressed through his arrangement differs greatly from the usual song and dance of the *bonodori*, appearing more somber and

¹²⁸ Sulasol is a Finnish music publishing company. Interestingly, they were the first foreign company to publish works by Matsushita.

¹²⁹ Matsushita, interview by author.

¹³⁰ Matsushita, *Nihon no Minyō Dai* 2, 3.

introspective, but he is able to keep the folk song recognizable through his prioritization of the melody.

Matsushita's a cappella version starts similarly to Ishimaru's with the idea of the *shamisen*-like imitation but with significant differences in interpretation. In Matsushita's opening, the non-metered free rhythm gets progressively faster on a single pitch, a characteristic opening for a *shamisen*.¹³¹ Matsushita adds a stereophonic effect by passing each note back and forth between the soprano and alto sections. This opening is only present in the Dai 2 version. Matsushita models the idea of the *shamisen* while incorporating sustained dissonances. These plucked and sustained tones are found in both versions, but are more prevalent in the second publication, and are representative of a "falling snow effect" (Figure 8).¹³²

When the melody finally does come in, it is sung at first by the sopranos in unison. This is the case for both versions. In the Dai 2 version, Matsushita adds interjections of tuplet figures from the octet, and later is accompanied by the "falling snow effect" sounds in the surrounding voices. On the final verse of the piece, the choir sings a homophonic modern harmonization of the folksong. He closes the piece as he started, with the "falling snow effect."

¹³¹ McGoldrick, "The *Tsugaru-Jamisen*: Its Origins, Construction, and Music," 67.

¹³² Matsushita, interview by author; In my interview with Matsushita, he discussed his intention with the onomatopoeic vocables being representative of the cold and quiet snow falling.

Structurally, both versions share the same overall form, but the Dai 2 version of “Aizu Bandaisan” is more elaborate and expanded in comparison to the Dai 1 version. The Dai 2 version is also longer at 102 measures in length compared to 84 measures in the Dai 1. The Dai 2 version includes an elaborate introduction, while the Dai 1 version is much shorter.

Harmonically, the *miyakobushi* scale that “Aizu Bandaisan” uses, lends itself easily to being fully harmonized in Phrygian and Locrian modes due to the properties of the scale. According to Koizumi’s tetrachord method of scalar analysis, the *miyakobushi* scale is constructed of two disjunct Tetrachord II types, which hold a minor 2nd interval from its root to infix.¹³³

<i>Miyakobushi</i> scale in G	
G A ^b C	D E ^b G
Phrygian in G	
G A ^b (B ^b) C	D E ^b (F) G

Figure 7: *Miyakobushi* scale and Phrygian mode relationship in “Aizu Bandaisan”

¹³³ Koizumi, *Nihon no Oto*, 308.

Due to the presence of the minor 2nd interval in Tetrachord II, there is a natural inclination for the *miyakobushi* scale to drift into sounding like Phrygian mode. In fact, Koizumi and Hughes discuss how Japanese folk scales carry modal functions, with the *miyakobushi* scale functioning often as a “mi” based pentatonic scale.¹³⁴ The two share many characteristics in terms of harmonic tendencies. In terms of the scale itself, the *miyakobushi* scale can fit into the Phrygian. This is due to the *miyakobushi* scale being based in what the Bartókian scholar, Ernő Lendvai would categorize as “mi-pentatony.”¹³⁵ Figure 5 demonstrates how Phrygian can be derived from the *miyakobushi* scale by simply filling in a B \flat and an F into the scale. As conductors and singers, it may prove helpful to lean into this Phrygian tendency when learning and rehearsing the piece. This expansion of the *miyakobushi* scale with the addition of non-nuclear tones creates modal figures that allow Matsushita more harmonic possibilities without sacrificing the tonal essence of the original folksong, which is observed most prominently in “Aizu Bandaisan” during the second verse.

An example of this can be found in the “wind figure” in the Dai 2 version, a moment where Matsushita inserts an ascending Phrygian scale in the added octet from measures 55–58. The main choir at this moment is singing the third phrase of the second verse which opens with the word “*kaze*,” meaning “wind.” The ascending Phrygian

¹³⁴ Hughes, 38.

¹³⁵ Karen Anne Bates, “The Fifth String Quartet of Bela Bartók: An Analysis Based on the Theories of Ernő Lendvai” (PhD diss., University of Arizona, 1986), 14–15, ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global.

figure in the octet is also sung on the syllable “*fu*,” which is an onomatopoeic word in Japanese for blowing air. In addition, the figure is sung with each pitch sustained to create a cluster chord of stepwise notes in the scale. Matsushita has not explicitly expressed that this Phrygian ascending figure is meant to represent wind, but the text and the choice of syllable justifies the wind representation as an artistically intuitive interpretation for singers and conductors. While the sustained cluster chord of the “wind figure” creates a harmonically interesting dissonance, it serves as a supporting role to the melody rather than a jarring focal point due to the figure’s harmonic relationship with the folk tune’s scale.

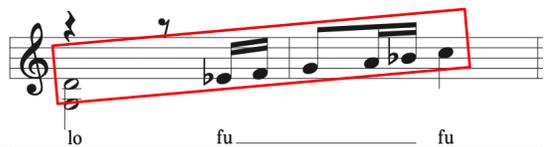
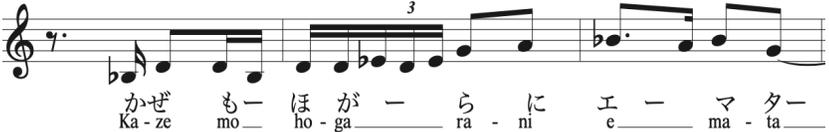
“Wind figure”:	
Melody:	

Figure 8: “Aizu Bandaisan” (Dai 2) mm 55–56, summarization of the D Phrygian scale in the “wind figure” in relation to the melody sung in the Alto line in mm 55–57. All pitches in the “wind figure” are sustained throughout the figure to create a cluster chord.

In addition to the expansion of harmonic possibilities with non-nuclear tones, Matsushita also uses quintal and quartal harmonies as a basis for several important compositional elements in “Aizu Bandaisan”, most notably a recurring figure which will be referred in this analysis as the “falling snow” motif.

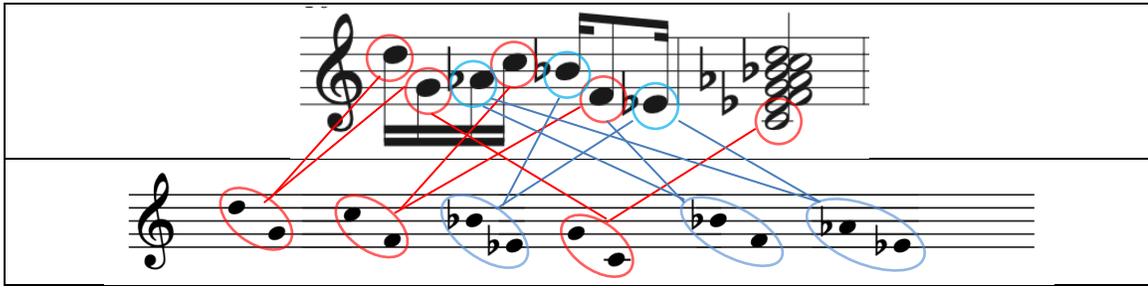


Figure 9: Summarization of "Falling Snow" motif in "Aizu Bandaisan" Dai 2 version with perfect 4th and 5th intervals outlined. All pitches in the first measure are sustained to form the cluster chord in the second.

The "falling snow" motif, as seen in Figure 7, is used extensively in the Introduction of the Dai 2 version and in its ending where it is raised by a half step. The figure is constructed around fourths and fifths, primarily D to G and F to C, and to a lesser extent B \flat to F and G to C. While the Dai 1 version uses a different set of pitches for the "falling snow" in the introduction, it does share the same set of pitches with the Dai 2 versions for its ending but is simplified to only include D \sharp , F \sharp , G \sharp , and C \sharp . While both of Matsushita's versions utilize a similar "falling snow" motif, they do so in different ways. The Introduction of the Dai 1 version lacks the opening aleatoric strumming *shamisen* figure and has a more condensed introduction with slightly different pitches making up the "falling snow" effect, most notably the use of A natural. The Dai 2 version elongates the process of building the "falling snow" figure that is prominent throughout the version by introducing a new pitch to the sequence at each iteration.

In Verse 2 of the Dai 2 version, Matsushita composes a similar arpeggiated pattern to the "Falling Snow" motif, also constructed around perfect fourths and fifths. Sung by the octet, this pattern functions as an accompaniment to the main folk song

material being sung in the main choir. The two-measure pattern is in a U-shape arch, starting with a descension followed by an ascension. The descending intervals of a perfect fourth and a perfect fifth are prominent in the descent, and the ascent is characterized by ascending perfect fourths.

The figure displays three systems of musical notation for piano accompaniment in 2/4 time. The top system features a melodic line in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. The right hand melody is annotated with intervals: m3, P4, m7, and m7. The left hand bass line is annotated with P4, P5, P4, P4, P4, and P4. A box labeled 'Intervallic Symmetry' highlights a specific melodic phrase with the interval sequence 5, 2, 1, 2, 5. The middle system is labeled 'Parallel P5 moving stepwise' and shows a sequence of chords in the left hand connected by a stepwise bass line. The bottom system is labeled 'Phrygian Wind Figure' and shows a specific melodic figure in the right hand and a corresponding chordal structure in the left hand.

Figure 10: Condensed score of the octet in “Aizu Bandaisan” Dai 2 version mm 43–56, Verse 2 accompaniment pattern. All pitches in the top staff are sustained to the end of each measure.

An interesting mathematical structure appears as well when observing the first and last note of each grouping as its own interval. They grow progressively and do so where the sum of the first two groupings equals the third. The first grouping is a minor third, the second a perfect fourth, and the third is a minor 7th (3+4=7). The pattern repeats for most of Verse 2. The Phrygian “wind figure” which occurs at the end of Verse 2 is derived from this pattern. The pattern is broken at measure 47, where Matsushita inserts an added one measure figure that is symmetrical in its intervallic structure: P4-M2-m2-M2-P4. This mirrored pattern can be seen numerically by counting half steps: 5-2-1-2-5. Tonally, it is centered around B minor, or possibly B Phrygian, although it is difficult to decipher the mode of the figure without the omitted second scale degree of C or C#. Functionally, it is used as a preparatory figure to precede the entrance of the parallel moving perfect fifths when the Octet Altos enter. The incorporation of quartal and quintal-based harmonies and motivic figures such as these can be viewed as an expanded reflection of Koizumi’s method of scalar analysis which divides scales primarily on the basis of tetrachords spanning a perfect fourth. Matsushita’s quartal and quintal figures demonstrate his ability to expand harmonic possibilities while remaining in the harmonic sleeve of the folksong’s original tonality.

The octet accompaniment in Verse 2 demonstrates how Matsushita is able to incorporate intervallic structures and modes to harmonize the existing folk material. The choir part, which is nearly identical in both versions, sings the melody in canon-like imitation on a minor sixth. The prominence of the pitch D gives the impression of a D based Phrygian modality. Sustained note values in the choir also are based on open

perfect intervals or on inversions of perfect intervals, primarily perfect fourths and fifths. The sustained notes act as cadences within the verse, segmenting the verse into two phrases, with the first phrase ending on a tonic sounding D-G-D chord and the second phrase ending on a D-G-A chord. The D-G-A chord can be seen as an inversion of two perfect fourths that are stacked together with A-D and D-G.

The Interlude is the most tonally complex section in both versions of the arrangement. The choir parts in this section are also virtually identical, with minor alterations at the end on a figure of descending eighth note triplets. Those minor alterations do not change the harmonic function of the figure. Matsushita treats this section as a miniature development, using a varied inverted melodic fragment from the original tune as a vehicle for an ascending half step modulation.

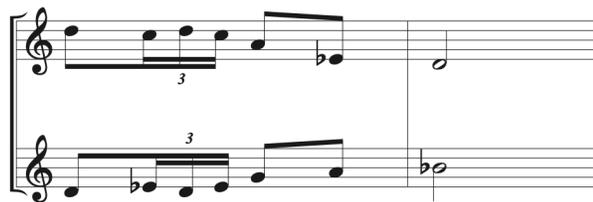


Figure 11: Inverted melodic fragment in the Interlude section. The inversion above is excerpted from mm 61–62 in the Soprano line of the Dai 2 version. The melodic fragment (below) is excerpted from mm 56–57 in the altos of the Dai 2 version.

The fragment is derived from the third line of each verse and contains a *kobushi*-like triplet sixteenth note ornament. Matsushita prominently features this figure in Verse 2 through use of imitation in measures 41-44 in the Dai 1 version and measures 56-59 in the Dai 2 version. By choosing to develop a fragment with *kobushi* ornamentation, which

is a distinctively Japanese vocal technique, Matsushita is able to connect a completely original section of the piece with the Japanese folk traditions. The fragment in its original form ascends and the inverted fragment descends. The relationship between the two is clearer when seen together. In the figure above, the top staff is the inverted melodic fragment and the bottom staff is the original melody.

Matsushita supplements the inverted melodic fragment with cluster chords and dissonances to create further tonal ambiguity. Tritones become an important aspect of the Interlude as well, which are another reference to compositional techniques found in Bartók's music. The tritone becomes more prominent in the second phrase of the Interlude where Matsushita alternates between an A and E \flat tonal centers. The Interlude can be divided into three phrases. Each phrase adheres toward a set of harmonies. The first two phrases are two iterations of the inverted melodic fragment, with the second phrase raising it by a whole step and also varying it. The final phrase occurs after the climactic fermata on an E half-diminished-7th chord with an added fourth (A), the peak of the Interlude, and is a descension of chromatic triplets that ultimately lands on a sustained A \flat 7th chord with a fourth suspension. This chord enharmonically sets up the key change to c \sharp minor/G \sharp Phrygian.

Table 2: Harmonic Analysis of the Interlude in "Aizu Bandaisan."

	Phrase 1	Phrase 2 ————— Climax	Phrase 3 ————— Transition
Tonalities	G–D	A–E \flat (G) E half dim-7	E ————— A \flat /G \sharp Phrygian (c \sharp minor)
Dai 1	mm 46–49	mm 50–54	mm 55–56
Dai 2	mm 62–65	mm 66–70	mm 71–72

The Interlude possesses interesting harmonic structural qualities that can be best illustrated using an Axis. The Axis system was developed by Ernő Lendvai as a method to analyze works by Bartók. Matsushita himself has stated that he uses Axis system principles in his compositions.¹³⁶ In Axis theory, there are three axes used: Tonic, Dominant, and Subdominant. Each axis is formed by drawing tritones across a circle of fifths. A typical movement of a circle of fifths progression would result in a clockwise moving Tonic-Dominant-Subdominant pattern. In the example below, Tonic is represented by green, Dominant by red, and Subdominant by blue. Each tonal area on the chart has three other related keys. In this example, G related to E, C \sharp , and B \flat . It should be noted that qualities of minor, major, diminished, and augmented do not affect the relationships. The primary tonal area at a given time is the pole.¹³⁷ The tonal area directly across from any given tonal area is the counterpole, and it is defined by being a tritone away.¹³⁸ For example, C \sharp is the counterpole of G.

¹³⁶ Matsushita, "Distinction of Japanese Native Sound Formation and Attempt of Fusing with Choral Music," 192–193.

¹³⁷ Bates, "The Fifth String Quartet of Bela Bartók: An Analysis Based on the Theories of Ernő Lendvai," 44–49.

¹³⁸ Ibid.

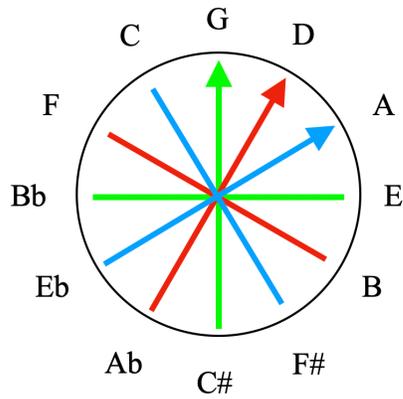
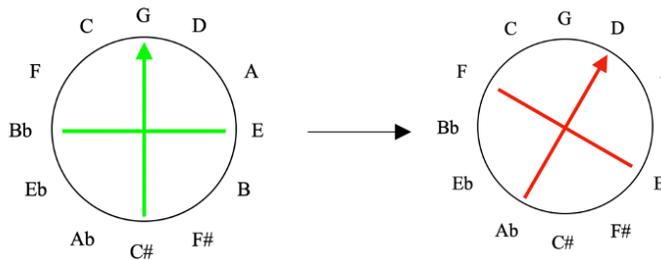


Figure 12: Tonic, Dominant, and Subdominant Axes in Circle of Fifths

By charting the harmonic relationships of the Interlude on these axes, structural patterns emerge. It becomes apparent how Matsushita uses the circle of fifths to navigate from G to Ab by using the Tonic-Dominant-Subdominant pattern through the use of substitutions on the axes. The observations made through this system reflect Matsushita’s approach to harmony in relation to form. These structural patterns can be used to help facilitate interpretation for conductors and singers.

Phrase 1:

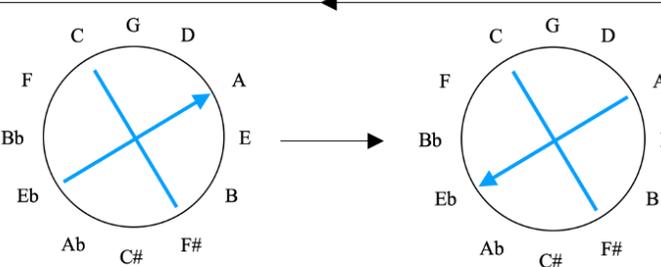


Tonalities **G (Tonic)** **D (Dominant)**

Dai 1 mm 46–49

Dai 2 mm 62–65

Phrase 2/
Climax:

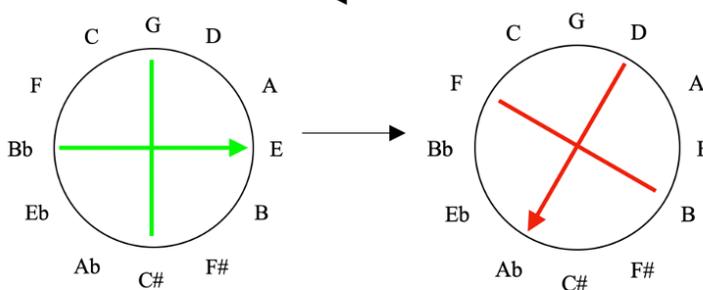


Tonalities **A (Subdominant)** **Eb (Counterpole Subdominant)**

Dai 1 mm 50–54

Dai 2 mm 66–70

Phrase 3/
Transition:



Tonalities **E (Tonic/Counterpole Bb)** **Ab (Dominant)**

Dai 1 mm 55–56

Dai 2 mm 71–72

Figure 13: Harmonic Analysis of the Interlude through the Axis System

The final phrase of the Interlude is constructed in an interesting harmonic manner as well. The Interlude ends with a series of descending eighth note triplets, moving in the order of E-E \flat -D and B \flat -A-A \flat . There are two sets of three chromatic descents that are segmented by major third. In the Dai 1 version, this is outlined in parallel octaves. In the Dai 2 version, this is fully harmonized in a progression of dominant-7th chords. When outlined with axes on a circle of fifths chart, a symmetrical pattern appears.

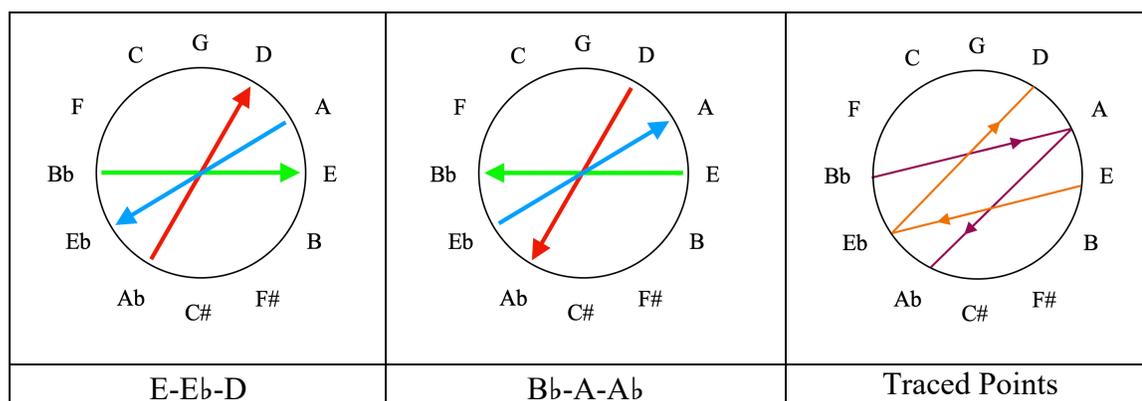


Figure 14: Axes Analysis of the Interlude's Final Phrase, Dai 1 mm 55–56, Dai 2 mm71–72

The graphing of these axes shows a relationship between the two sets of descending chromatic pitches. The second set is simply the reflection of the first, using the counterpoles of the first. Tracing the points on the circle of fifths will also garner a symmetrical shape and identifies the reflective nature of the figure. Matsushita cleverly uses this figure to smoothly transition from E to A \flat , allowing for the second iteration of Verse 1 to be raised a half step from the piece's original key.

In general, the Dai 1 version is a more truncated version of the arrangement, while Dai 2 elongates sections and elaborates more on texture. The hallmark of the Dai 2 version is the use of an octet, whose primary function is as accompaniment for the choir. The octet in the Dai 2 version shares musical ideas with the Dai 1 version (Dai 1: mm 30–45; Dai 2: mm 43–61), but for the most part the musical material of the octet is unique to the Dai 2 version. It is much easier to find commonalities between the choir part of the Dai 2 version and the Dai 1 version, and often there are little to no differences between the two choir parts. Both have Sopranos sing the first two phrases of Verse 1 alone on the melody with no harmony. Both treat Verse 2 almost identically with its use of imitation. The tonally unstable Interlude section, which Matsushita uses as a short developmental section to modulate to a G# Phrygian tonal center, is similar in both the Dai 1 version and the choir part of the Dai 2 version. The second iteration of Verse 1 that follows the Interlude, characterized by its homophonic harmonization of the folk tune, begins exactly the same in both versions, but the Dai 2 version does expand upon the second half of the verse more before moving to the arrangement's ending.

Despite having differences, the two versions are closely related, and in many instances identical. Both versions also share similarities in how sections relate proportionally to the whole, specifically the developmental Interlude section. As an admirer of Bartók, Matsushita has in the past discussed how he utilizes certain compositional techniques that are inspired by Bartók, such as the use of Fibonacci-based

structures like the Golden Section, or Golden Ratio.¹³⁹ This may have been a factor in the method in which both versions were constructed in regard to harmonic development and form and why there are similarities in form to both versions.

What becomes apparent when comparing the two versions, is how Matsushita progressively harmonizes the folk tune, a trait found in many of his compositions based in Japanese folk songs. Matsushita believes firmly that the character of the folk song cannot be lost when composing an artistic arrangement.¹⁴⁰ Even with the added complexity to the introduction of the Dai 2 version, both versions present the first appearance of the melody after the *kakegoe*, “*iya*,” without any harmonization. It is a moment purely focusing on the melody. By doing so, Matsushita clearly identifies the folk song’s character and can further elaborate on it as the piece continues. Verse 2 shifts to a related key and adds an imitative texture to the melody but keeps the original tune relatively unchanged and simply harmonized. The Interlude, despite being the most adventurous section of the piece, maintains the folk songs melodic material through fragmentation. The recapitulation of Verse 1 is treated in the grandest harmonization and is the first time Matsushita harmonizes the full melody in homophony. “Aizu Bandaisan” demonstrates key elements of Matsushita’s compositional style in his choral works based on Japanese folk music. These traits include the progressive building of harmony and textures through techniques such as canon, cluster chords, quartal and quintal harmonies,

¹³⁹ Matsushita, “Distinction of Japanese Native Sound Formation and Attempt of Fusing with Choral Music,” 193.

¹⁴⁰ Matsushita, interview by author.

tritone relationships, and incorporation of non-nuclear tones that relate to the traditional scale.

Conducting and Rehearsal Considerations

The first consideration that must be taken by a conductor interested in this work is deciding which version to perform. The Dai 1 version is far more accessible in terms of voicing and the number of vocal forces required. For a smaller ensemble, the Dai 1 version may present as the most viable option. The Dai 2 version adds more musical interest with the addition of the octet. For the advanced treble ensemble, the Dai 2 version may present a more musically challenging yet rewarding experience. The way the octet is notated seems to indicate that all octet voices should sing every pitch until they reach the sustained pitch on their vocal part. This would be a practical approach to ensuring that all the entrances on the arpeggiated figures have an accurate onset.

Tempo issues were identified during rehearsal in relation to the arpeggiated “falling snow” figures in the Dai 2 version. The piece is written in 2/4 with the tempo marking of quarter note equaling fifty-four. Conducting this in a two pattern can create difficulty in accurately singing the subdivisions found in the octet arpeggiated figures. For rehearsal purposes, a consideration may be to start in a four pattern with the eighth note as the beat and then once the ensemble is more comfortable with the subdivisions, going back to a two pattern as written which fits better with the phrasing of the melodic material.

In rehearsing the Dai 1 version with a group of volunteer singers for my doctoral lecture recital, the section that presented the most challenge was the interlude from

measures 46–57.¹⁴¹ In both versions, the interlude is used for modulation purposes and is newly introduced material. Maintaining ensemble intonation through the modulations can be difficult. A successful approach I found was to rehearse the section in two measure increments. Since the two phrases are a varied sequence of each other, it makes sense to rehearse this section in two measure increments. Once the first phrase is learned, the second phrase will make sense. The fermata followed by the descending eighth note triplets provide interesting logistical considerations for gesture. Dictating each triplet allows for a more dramatic *ritardando* before the climactic recapitulation, however, conducting the passage in a traditional duple pattern allows for more fluidity through the phrase.

It is important at the end of the interlude to maintain a *forte* dynamic to support the soprano entrance at measure 58 (Dai 1) and measure 71 (Dai 2). This final transition to the recapitulation of the first verse is the climax of the piece. Its effectiveness is partially determined by the strong entrance of the exposed E in the sopranos that leads into it. Establishing a *fortissimo* foundation in the lower voices brings stability to the onset of the Soprano 1 entrance.

One wonderful aspect of “Aizu Bandaisan” is that directors have a choice in which version they would like to select for their ensembles based on their ability and size. While both are typically performed by treble voices, Matsushita does state in the preface of *Nihon no Min'yō Dai 1 Shū* that the Dai 1 version could be performed with a tenor and

¹⁴¹ In the Dai 2 version, the interlude occurs in measures 62–73.

bass ensemble, stating, “As I mentioned at the beginning, the songs in this collection are effective for all equal voice choirs. Especially, the effect is great when sung by male choir, so that I wish many male choir groups will love to sing them.”¹⁴² A tenor and bass rendition of the piece would be a unique performance of “Aizu Bandaisan.”

Pronunciation Guide and Translation

“Aizu Bandaisan”

イヤー、会津磐梯山は
I-ya, Aizubandaisan wa
[ija, aizubandaisan wa]

Iya, Mt. Bandai of Aizu is

宝の山よ
Takara no yama yo
[takara no jama jo]

A treasure of a mountain.

笹に黄金が (エーマタ)
Sasa ni kogane ga (ehmata)
[sasa ni kogane ga ε:mata]

On the bamboo there is gold

なり下がる。
Nari sagaru.
[nari sagaru]

That hangs.

イヤー、会津盆地の
I-ya, Aizubonchi no
[ija, aizubontʃi no]

Iya, the Aizu Basin's

みどりの夏よ
Midori no natsu yo
[midori no natsu jo]

Green summer!

風もほがらに鶴ヶ城。
Kaze mo hogara ni Tsurugajō.
[kaze mo hogara ni tsurugajo:]

The wind breezes by Tsuruga Castle.

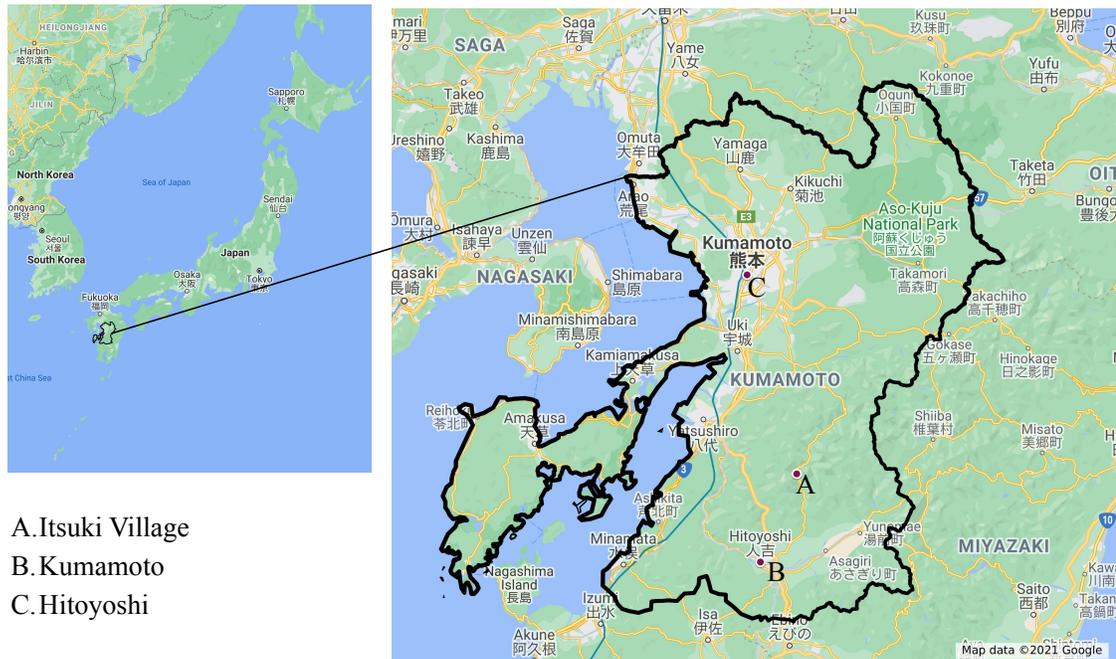
¹⁴² Matsushita, *Nihon no Minyō Dai 1*, 3.

“Itsuki no Komori Uta”

Background

Voiced for a treble choir, “Itsuki no Komori Uta” was first published in 2000 in *Nihon no Minyo Dai 2 Shū* or *Japanese Folksongs 2 for Equal Voices* (English title). Matsushita later adapted the arrangement for an SATB ensemble, but only the original SSAA arrangement will be discussed. The folk song is tied to Itsuki Village in Kumamoto Prefecture located on Kyushu Island. Being a traditional song from Kyushu, the text is in a dialect specific to the region known as *Hichiku-ben*.¹⁴³

¹⁴³ Takuchiro Onishi, “35 Dialects of Japan,” *The Handbook of Dialectology*, ed. by Charles Boberg, John Nerbonne, and Dominic Watt, Hoboken, NJ, USA: John Wiley & Sons, Inc, 2017, 566.



- A. Itsuki Village
- B. Kumamoto
- C. Hitoyoshi

Figure 15: Map of Kumamoto Prefecture¹⁴⁴

The song is a lullaby and is categorized under the genre of *Warabe Uta*, or children’s songs.¹⁴⁵ The folk tune is one of the most well-known songs to be affiliated with Itsuki Village and depicts the harsh life for the peasant class during the Kamakura Era through the Tokugawa Era (1185-1868).¹⁴⁶ Under feudalism, the peasant class was generally severely poverty stricken. As forms of slavery were legal during this long period of history, it was a common practice for a peasant-class family to sell a child to a wealthier

¹⁴⁴ “Map of Kumamoto Prefecture,” Google Maps, accessed April 30, 2022, <https://www.google.com/maps/d/u/0/edit?mid=1VEpDou5CvRtWN8LkV6biWcZx4pHWBAoZ&usp=sharing>.

¹⁴⁵ Kishimoto, “Tracing the Development of Japanese Choral Tradition, and the Influence of Buddhism and Western Music,” 43.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

family to work as a caregiver, or *komori*, to their children. This song was sung by *komori* taken away from their homes to children whom they were looking after and portrays their plight of being poor while serving the wealthy.

The lullaby is well known throughout Japan, gaining popularity in the second half of the twentieth century.¹⁴⁷ Although the title is named after Itsuki Village, the current tune known as “Itsuki no Komori Uta” actually originated in Hitoyoshi, a larger town about 25 kilometers south of Itsuki.¹⁴⁸ It is said to have been “discovered” by a high school teacher from Hitoyoshi city in 1935. More likely, it was catalogued by a local historian, Teruo Uemura who collected 350 sets of *komori-uta* lyrics in Itsuki Village and the surrounding areas.¹⁴⁹

Geographically, Itsuki Village is in a very remote location, nestled in heavily forested mountains of Kyūshū. The region is called Gokanoshō and is a collection of five small villages. The region holds legendary significance and is the location of mythical stories surrounding the escape of people from the Heike samurai clan after their defeat by the Genji. The rival warrior clans, Heike and Genji are also known by the names Taira and Minamoto, respectively. The Heike samurai retreated into these forests seeking refuge and remained there. The mythical tale is based in actual events that took place in Japan during the Genpei War in the late twelfth century and is well known throughout

¹⁴⁷ Asano, *Nihon Minyō Daijiten*, 58.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁹ Erick E. Masuyama, “Desire and Discontent in Japanese Lullabies,” *Western Folklore* 48, no. 2, (April 1989): 144–148, <https://doi.org/10.2307/1499687>.

Japan. The end of the Genpei War resulted in Minamoto no Yoritomo consolidating power over Japan and unifying it through the establishment of the first national *bakufu*, with Minamoto no Yoritomo becoming Japan's first *shogun*. The defeated Heike people in Gokanosho would come under the rule of the *shogun*-appointed *daimyō* of the region, resulting in the Heike people remaining poor and in servitude to the Genji for generations. The title of the folk tune infers that the *komori* depicted through the song is born out of this history of the region.

The reputation of the area is an important aspect of the character of the folk song. The remoteness of Itsuki Village mirrors the isolated feeling of the *komori* unable to escape a cruel plight due to generations of inescapable poverty. The village also conjures images of mystery and nostalgia. There is an element of *furusato* in the title of the folk tune. Itsuki Village and *komori* both possess the idea of an older Japan, a Japan with a simpler way of life in comparison to bustling metropolises like modern-day Tokyo. *Komori-uta* are also a type of lullaby that is unique to Japan, born out of a specific set of circumstances surrounding poverty, class, and social expectations of pre-WWII Japan. While most lullabies in the West center around soothing a child and getting them to fall asleep, *komori-uta* depict desires, discontent, and even hatred.¹⁵⁰ The lullabies were an expressive outlet for *komori* to “say what was unsayable in public in order to release their feelings.”¹⁵¹

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

¹⁵¹ Ibid, 147.

Analysis

Matsushita captures the immediate suffering of the *komori* through an introduction in minor that starts in the Alto 2 line and layers voice by voice progressively upwards. He then creates the effect of a lullaby with an arpeggiated ostinato figure in the sopranos and second alto lines while the first altos introduce the melody, a scheme he flips this scheme for the second verse. His setting comes to a climax on the text, “*dai ga naite kurukya,*” meaning, “who will cry for me?” It is at this moment when the *komori* ponders despairingly if anyone will care whether she dies. At this moment, Matsushita exhibits *forte* dissonances and sustained chords to portray the anxiety of the *komori*.

One aspect that makes “*Itsuki no Komori Uta*” stand out from other Japanese *minyō* is that it is typically written and performed in 3/4 time. In most instances, metered Japanese *minyō* do not use triple meter, instead preferring duple meters. Dotted figures and 6/8 time signatures are quite common as well. However, it can also be difficult to determine if a Japanese folksong is free of meter. While “*Itsuki no Komori Uta*” is typically known with a 3/4 time signature in most of Japan due to Western influenced arrangements and performances, “back in its home region, unaccompanied, it seems to be basically non-metric but with passages where a pulse is discernible,” which would be more similar to *Oiwake* style.¹⁵² In the notes of *Nihon no Minyō Dai 2 Shū*, Matsushita

¹⁵² Hughes, 29.

states that the triple meter “is said to reflect possible influence from the Korean Peninsula, though this connection has not been proven.”¹⁵³

Regardless of the origins of the meter, Matsushita draws a connection between 3/4 and 6/8 time signatures in the use of a main rhythmic motif heard throughout the arrangement. The use of offbeat quarter notes followed by eighth notes in the upper voices gives a sensation of 6/8, while the emphasis of beats one and two in the altos create a 3/4 feeling. The dissonance in the meter reflects the uneasiness felt by the *komori* described in the text. This figure first appears in measure 10, and appears throughout the piece, mainly as an accompaniment figure over which Matsushita states the melody.

In addition to the rhythmic elements of this figure, there is a consistent and interesting harmonic pattern. For the most part, when this figure is presented, there is a harmonic progression of i–ii, although it is altered to a i–IV pattern in measures 60–64 by removing the second scale degree and using the fourth scale degree as the root. In both cases, however, the only way to achieve this harmonic pattern is to raise the 6th scale degree, which results in an oscillating harmonic movement upward and downward by whole steps, adding to the mysterious aesthetic of the origins of the folk tune.

¹⁵³ Matsushita, *Nihon no Min'yō Dai 2 Shū*, 2–3.

Accompaniment figure in mm 10–13:

O - do - ma bon-giri bo - ngiri Bon-kara
おどまぼんぎりぼんぎりぼんから

ha ha

ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha

D minor: (i — ii)

Accompaniment figure in mm 60–63:

ru Se-mi-ja go-zan - se - n I-mo
るせみじゃござんせんいもう

ru ha ha

ru ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha

A minor: (i — IV)

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Figure 16: Accompaniment figure in mm 10–14 and its variation in mm 60–63.

Matsushita constructs his arrangement with clear identifiable sections, connected by recurring musical ideas. The form can be best outlined as the following structure:

Introduction-A-A'-B-C-D-A''-C'-Coda.

Table 3: Outline of Form in "Itsuki no Komori Uta."

Section: Measures:	Introduction: mm 1-9	A: mm 10-20	A': mm 21-29	B: mm 30-42	C: mm 43-52	D: mm 53-60	A'': mm 61-71	C': mm 72-81	Coda: mm 81-87
Verses:	N/a	Verse 1	Verse 2	Verse 2 material + Verse 1	Verse 3	Verse 4	Verse 4	Verse 3 material	N/a
Texture:	Polyphony	Melody presented monodically	Melody presented in imitation	Polyphony	Homophony	Melody presented in imitation	Melody presented monodically	Homophony	Chordal
Themes:	Introductory material derived from melody.	Accomp. Figure	Accomp. Figure	Fragments of Verses 1 and 2, Ascension figure	Crying Phrase	Sustained 5th scale degree	Accomp. Figure	Crying Phrase variation	Sustained 5th scale degree, Accomp. Figure
Key:	D minor	D minor	D minor	D minor —	A minor	A minor	A minor	A minor – C minor	C minor

Matsushita's interest in what he describes as "jazzy chords" are apparent throughout the introduction.¹⁵⁴ He begins the introduction in D minor and uses a variation of the first six notes of the melody as a thematic idea. This short thematic idea is used to layer the entrances of each voice. Matsushita slyly introduces the raised sixth scale degree (B \sharp) in the second soprano line on beat four of the second measure, which is an integral part of the rhythmic motif described earlier. The raised sixth in measure 2 also forms a tritone interval between the second soprano and the first alto creating tension that could be viewed as a representation of the *komori's* suffering. The B \sharp , later repeated in measure 3, also creates uncertainty in the tonal center. The key is further obscured in measure 4 with a B \flat 7 chord that would imply movement towards an E \flat tonal center.

¹⁵⁴ Matsushita, interview by author; He stated that he likes to write "jazzy chords" in his choral music.

Matsushita instead backtracks to an A minor chord on measure 5 and repeats material seen in measure 3 with different voicing. In measure 6, Matsushita uses one of his “jazzy chords,” a B \flat -9 chord, which resolves to an E \flat -9 chord on the downbeat of measure 7. Matsushita begins to bring stability back to the tonal center in measure 8 with a d minor-7 chord moving to an A minor-7 chord. The introduction ends with an A minor chord, which, although it is minor, can be seen as serving a dominant function, leaving the introduction on a half cadence.

The image shows a musical score for the introduction and first verse of "Itsuki no Komori Uta." The score is written in treble clef with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The introduction (measures 1-9) is marked with a blue bracket. The first verse (measures 10-11) is marked with a blue bracket. The chords are: D minor, A minor, B \flat 7, A minor, B \flat 9, E \flat 9, D minor 7, A minor 7 (v7 — i), and D minor.

Figure 17: Harmonic sequence of the introduction in "Itsuki no Komori Uta."

The half cadence at the end of the introduction leads nicely into the first verse (A section), which begins with the aforementioned i–ii harmonic pattern. This is also the first moment in the piece where a clear and discernible pulse in triple meter is felt. The first verse is marked “*Adagietto lamentabile*” with quarter note=ca.56 and presents the folk melody clearly over the accompaniment figure. The melody in Verse 1 is largely unaltered—an important compositional choice by Matsushita, who firmly believes that

the essence of the folk song must be retained and remain recognizable when composing choral arrangements of folk-based music.¹⁵⁵

Verse 1 is in D minor, with the melody being in *miyakobushi* scale, a minor pentatonic scale with the pitches: A, B \flat , D, E, F.

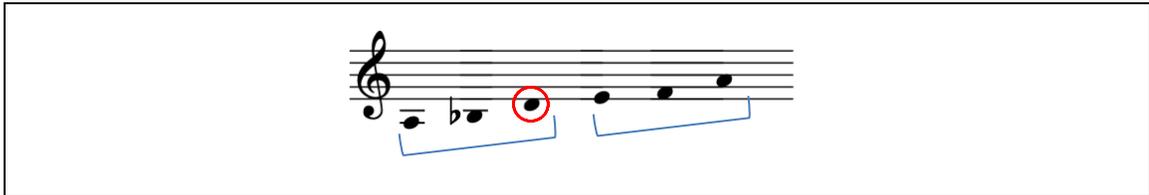


Figure 18: Scalar outline of “Itsuki no Komori Uta.”

These pitches can be arranged in two disjunct tetrachords (Tetrachord II) which form the scale.¹⁵⁶ The pitch, D, acts as a central tonality for the piece, anchoring it in a D minor-sounding key. The raised sixth scale degree (B \sharp) in the harmonic progression does not create much dissonance with the melody since the first phrase of the tune largely avoids the B \flat in the scale. In the second phrase of the melody, where the B \flat is more present, Matsushita changes the harmonies of the accompaniment pattern so that there is no dissonance between B \flat and B \sharp .

¹⁵⁵ Matsushita, interview by author.

¹⁵⁶ Koizumi, *Nihon no Oto*, 302–308.

11

ha ha

ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha -

p *
 おどまほんざり ほんざりほんから さ きゃーおらん
 O - do - ma bon - giri bo - n giri Bon - kara sa - kya - o - ran -

ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha

15

ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha

p *pp*
 ha ha ほんが はよ く --- りゃ ha
 Bo - n - ga ha - yo ku - - - rya ha

pp *p*
 と ha ha ha ha ha ha ha はよ
 to ha ha ha ha ha ha ha Ha - yo -

ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha

18

ha ha ha ha ha

ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha

pp ha ha
 もどる ha
 mo - do ru ha

ha ha ha ha

Figure 19: Verse 1 melody in Matsushita's "Itsuki no Komori Uta," mm 11–20.

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In the A section, there are two main ideas occurring, the accompaniment pattern and the melody. There is no imitation or direct harmonization of the melodic line, and in this sense, Matsushita treats Verse 1 simply. The melody does shift voices at measures 15–17, trading off from Alto 1 to Soprano 2, and then back down to Alto 2. Other than this moment, which was most likely done to prevent the altos from going into their upper range, the melody remains very unaltered and intact.

Verse 2 continues the use of the accompaniment figure and the melody, now sung in the Alto 2 line, but also adds counterpoint to the melody sung by the Soprano 1 line during the first phrase of the verse, from measures 21–24. During the second phrase, Matsushita again transitions the melody to an upper voice part (Soprano 1) for roughly three measures before finishing the melody of the verse back to a lower voice part (Alto 2). Verse 2 is an elaboration on the material that Matsushita presents in Verse 1, therefore Verse 2 can be viewed as derivative of the A section.

Measure 30 marks the beginning of the B section, which contrasts greatly in texture and in style. The accompaniment pattern seen in the two A sections ends, and Matsushita begins to use fragments of verses 1 and 2 in imitative polyphony. Matsushita shifts the meter to 4/4 time signature and begins the B section begins with two short quasi-cansons, one being sung between both alto voices and one being sung between both soprano voices. The altos' text is from the last phrase of verse 2, while the sopranos' is from the end of the first phrase of verse 1. Matsushita uses imitation to layer each voice's

entrance one at a time, varying the texture and building up momentum. By measure 35, it is evident that Matsushita is writing the B section to be developmental.

Verse 1 fragments/vari- ations (orange)	<p>35</p> <p>さ — きや おらん と ほん が は よ く sa — kya O-ran-to Bo-n-ga ha-yo-ku-</p> <p>お らん と — はよ — も ど る はよもど O-ra-n-to Ha-yo-mo-do-ru Ha-yo-mo-do-</p>
Verse 1 first phrase (blue)	<p>— おどまほん ざり ほ — んざりほん から さきや — おらん — O-do-ma bon-giri bo-n-giri Bon-kara sa-kya O-ran-</p>
Octaves moving in scalar motion (purple)	<p>ど — ま か — んじ — ん か — んじ — ん do — ma ka — n ji — n ka — n ji — n</p>

38

りや は よ
rya Ha-yo

る Ah

はよくりや — もど — る
Ha-yo-ku-rya Mo-do-ru

と Ah

ほ — んか — ら
Bo-n-ka-ra

か — んじ — ん
ka — n ji — n

おどまほんざり ほ — んざりほんから
O-do-ma bon-giri bo-n-giri Bon-kara

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Figure 20: “Itsuki no Komori Uta”, B section, mm 35–42.¹⁵⁷

The first phrase of the melody with Verse 1 text appears in the Alto 1 line, augmented to fit into 4/4 time signature. Above this, the sopranos are singing independent lines of varied fragments from Verse 1 that echo each other despite not singing the same pitches. Below the Alto 1 line, the Alto 2 line starts a slow half note scalar ascension in octaves. This ascension starts on the lowest pitch of the entire piece, requiring the bottom of the Alto 2 split to sing a low D. At measure 38, a transitory arpeggiated figure allows Matsushita to shift these musical ideas into different voice parts in measure 39, where the scalar octaves begin a descent. These elements show that he is using pre-existing material, in this case the melody, and varying it through fragmentation, sequencing, and augmentation, while also implementing newly composed material not seen yet in the piece.

There is an interesting progression of seventh chords that occurs at measure 38. This is the final measure of the ascension of half notes seen in the Alto 2 line, and leads to the peak of the B section, after which point the B section begins to utilize a descending motion. Measure 38 contains a C-7 chord succeeded by a A-7 chord. The A-7 chord holds a dominant function, which is confirmed by the D minor chord on the downbeat of measure 39. The C-7 chord acts as a pre-dominant chord. This acts as the first cadential point in the B section mirrors the harmonic progression of $VII^7-V^{6/5}-i$. After this cadence, the B section shifts back into 3/4 time signature and pivots toward a modulation into the C section.

Matsushita heightens the drama and tension of the lullaby's story by borrowing fragments of text and melodic material from Verse 1 in measures 39–41. The text from

Verse 1 highlights the terms of the *komori*'s servitude, which will last until “*bon*,” a Japanese Buddhist holiday period typically found in mid to late summer.¹⁵⁸ After “*bon*,” the *Komori*'s term will end, and she can leave and return home. The sooner “*bon*” arrives, the sooner she can go home. I interpret this as an intensification of the desperation of the *komori* by condensing all of Verse 1's elements into 4 measures of musical material, while especially stressing the words “*modoru*” (return) and “*bon-giri*” (*bon* time). To add to the drama, there is a move towards a modulation occurring as well in measures 41–42, where Matsushita begins to stress the outline of an E-7 chord. This chord holds a dominant function and is used as a pivot chord to modulate into A minor on the downbeat of measure 43.

Measures 43–52 covers the third verse of the folk song and is also a new section (labeled as C section) within the piece. The third verse of “*Itsuki no Komori Uta*” is the dramatic peak of the folk song and where the *komori* ponders her own mortality and self-worth, asking, “Who will cry for me if I die?”¹⁵⁹ She answers her own question by stating that only the cicadas in the surrounding mountains of pine trees will cry for her. A few key characteristics distinguish this section related to tessitura, dynamics, and texture. The melody has now been modulated up to A minor. The raising of the key helps to heighten the dramatic impact of the text. The melody carried by the Soprano 1 line is now in a higher tessitura and is the first time in the piece where the Soprano 1 line goes above the

¹⁵⁸ *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, s.v. “Bon,” July 31, 2017, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Bon-Japanese-festival>.

¹⁵⁹ Matsushita, *Nihon no Min'yō Dai 2 Shū*, 69.

staff. This section is also the first time in Matsushita's arrangement where the texture is homophonic. The higher tessitura in combination with the homophonic texture builds a natural *fortissimo*, as marked in the score. Matsushita places the melody in the Soprano 1 and Alto 2 lines an octave apart from each other in measures 43–46, which emphasizes the melody of the folk song while the inner voices provide harmony. The homophonic texture dramatically presents the folksong in a majestic fashion not seen until this moment in the piece. This is demonstrated in measures 45–46, where Matsushita harmonizes the text "*naita kuryu kya,*" meaning, "who will cry for me?"

45

な - いた くりゅう きゃ う ら の ま つ
 Na i - ta - ku - ryu kya U - ra - no Ma . . . tsu .

な - いた くりゅう きゃ う ら の ま つ
 Na i - ta - ku - ryu kya U - ra - no Ma . . . tsu .

な - いた くりゅう きゃ う ら の ま つ
 Na i - ta - ku - ryu kya U - ra - no Ma . . . tsu .

な - いた くりゅう きゃ う ら の ま つ
 Na i - ta - ku - ryu kya U - ra - no Ma . . . tsu .

FM7 — Am7 — Ger⁺⁶ — E

Ko Matsushita ITSUKI NO KOMORIUTA
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Figure 21: The “crying figure” from "Itsuki no Komori Uta", mm 45–47¹⁶⁰

The chord progression he uses of (VI^{4/2} – i^{4/3} – German⁺⁶ – V) as seen in Figure 21 also appears at the end of the piece and uses a revoiced German augmented 6th chord that leads into the strong E major chord (V) that occurs on the downbeat of measure 46. The chord on the downbeat of measure 45 is constructed using the pitches an A minor pentatonic scale. By omitting the B-natural, Matsushita harmonizes the melody using an FM7 in third inversion. The dissonance of a minor 2nd between the Alto 1 and 2 lines can be interpreted as accentuating the emotions of the *komori*. For this analysis, the

¹⁶⁰ Matsushita, *Nihon no Minyō Dai 2 Shū*, 20.

progression will be labeled as the “crying figure” and appears later in the piece as well and is a significant musical idea in the arrangement.

Matsushita has discussed how Japanese folk music can be harmonized for dramatic effects by using tetrachords that are created by stacking notes of the pentatonic scale. By using this method, he can harmonize the folk tune without compromising the integrity of the scale that it is set in. He will add non-scale tones when necessary to create a harmonic tendency or create a dramatic effect. This can be seen in the use of the D-sharp in measure 45 to create a leading tone to E (secondary dominant to dominant), and in measure 47 with the use of G-sharp in the Alto 2 line to create a leading tone back to A (dominant to tonic). One example of using non-scale tones for dramatic effect in the C section is in the lamentable descending chromatic line in the Alto 1 from measures 48–50. It is this author’s interpretation that the cries of the cicadas are being portrayed through the Alto 1 line during these two measures. The descent is accompanied by a long *decrescendo* that closes the third verse in total contrast to the way it began. The texture starts thinning by measure 50, and Matsushita ends the C section on the pitch E, the fifth scale degree, sung in octaves between sopranos and altos sung at a diminishing dynamic level from *mezzo piano* to *piano*. The C section of “Itsuki no Komori Uta” demonstrates Matsushita’s methodology of creating an interesting variety of harmonic choices ranging from dense dissonance, strong consonance, and thinned unisons to enhance drama while not obscuring the folksong’s source material.

The final verse begins in the D section, which is defined by its sparse texture, imitative treatment of melody, and sustained accompanying voices primarily emphasizing

fifth scale degree which concluded the C section. The final verse translates to, “But who is crying now? Not cicadas, but my little sister, sent here to toil the same as me. Little sister, do not cry! It only makes my load harder to bear.”¹⁶¹ Matsushita shifts to a lighter polyphonic texture, opening the D section with the melody sung in the Soprano 2 line and a counterpoint idea being sung by the Alto 1 line. With these elements, the D section is set relatively calm to contrast with the previous dramaticism exhibited in section C and is structurally serves as a transition to recapitulated material that follows.

Measure 60 sees the return of section A material through variations. Matsushita returns the accompaniment figure heard in the previous A sections but modifies it into a harmonically major variation (Figure 16). From measure 60–71, there are a few other similarities with the A sections seen earlier. Both sections use the accompaniment figure and pass the melody between the sopranos and altos by phrases. There is also a return to 3/4 time signature, but there are some other meters inserted as well. The overall feeling of pulse, however, is dominated by triple meter.

Measure 72 marks a recapitulation of section C, but with alterations. Matsushita is again using C material to heighten the tension. The text from Verse 3 is used again, and there is a return of the “crying chord” progression seen earlier and another upward modulation that raises the tessitura of the Soprano 1 line to above the staff while also increasing the dynamic level to *fff* while the texture moves to homophony. In the first C section, Matsushita was able to use the end of the B section to modulate up from D minor

¹⁶¹ Matsushita, *Nihon no Min'yō Dai 2 Shū*, 69.

into A minor. At measure 72, however, he does not use the same method, instead choosing to repeat the first line of text of Verse 3 and then transposing the repetition up a minor third, modulating from A minor into C minor. The line of text being repeated during this modulation translates to, “if I die.” Matsushita captures the mournful panic of the *komori* in this modulation from A minor to C minor, which is further exacerbated by the tempo marking, *Più mosso, furioso ed elegiaco*. There is an agitated rush into the “crying” chord progression at measures 76–77. This is an altered version of the same progression seen at measures 45–46. Since the piece has modulated again, the “crying” figure here is of course raised by a minor third. Matsushita keeps the use of a revoiced German augmented sixth chord to precede the dominant V chord (G major) on the syllable “*kya*” at measure 77. The “crying” figure is repeated at measure 78 with a different harmonization, opting to stay within notes diatonic to C minor. Matsushita here for an F minor-9th chord to an F minor-7th chord to act as a predominant (iv9-7) to the G major chord (V) heard on measure 79. The verse ends by dropping harmonization altogether and instead singing the melody at octaves between the altos and sopranos on the text “*kuryukya*,” meaning, “will [anyone]?” From measures 76-81, Matsushita is progressively simplifying the harmonic texture by decreasing the amount of chromaticism and density. The piece ends with a sustained G pedal in octaves sung by the outer voices while the inner voices sing the rocking rhythmic accompaniment pattern from section A. The rhythmic accompaniment pattern signifies the *komori*'s childcare duties as an indentured servant, and it's return at the very end of the piece serves as a haunting reminder of the fate that she is bound to fulfill and unable to escape.

Within the Western medium of a choral arrangement, Matsushita stays within the parameters of preserving the character and origins of the Japanese folk song. One way he achieves this in “Itsuki no Komori Uta” is by keeping elements of traditional folk singing over his modern interpretation of the tune. Throughout “Itsuki no Komori Uta,” Matsushita inserts *kobushi*-like ornamentations in the melody. Examples can be seen at measure 48 in the Soprano 1 line, measure 54 in the Alto 2 line, and measure 67 in the Alto 2 line. While it is subtle and could be viewed as just being part of the original melody, singing *kobushi* is an important performance practice for *minyō* singers.¹⁶² Therefore, his inclusion of *kobushi*-like figures should be viewed as a significant stylistic choice meant to perpetuate the importance of retaining folk musical elements within a *minyō* choral arrangement.

Another important aspect of retaining the character of a folk song is to set the song in the dialect of origin. This is not necessarily a conscious choice by Matsushita since it is common for folk songs in Japan to be sung in a regional dialect, however, Matsushita stresses its importance as a key characteristic of a folk song’s uniqueness.¹⁶³ While standardized Japanese from Tokyo is becoming the norm across Japan, it is still common for rural areas to retain their specific dialects, especially in older generations. In addition, regional dialects tie in heavily with the concept of *furusato and* are a source of

¹⁶² Hughes, 31–32.

¹⁶³ Matsushita, interview by author.

pride for many Japanese people as they celebrate their own heritages. Japanese dialects often contract or spell words in unique ways.¹⁶⁴

They also have their own idioms and will even use completely different words from people in Tokyo. “Itsuki no Komori Uta” comes from the remote mountains of Kumamoto Prefecture in Kyushu and is in the same family as the Hichiku dialect.¹⁶⁵ There are many different pronunciations of words in comparison to Tokyo. For example, the word for “I” or “me” in standard Japanese is “*watashi*” or “*boku*.” In more informal settings “*ore*” might even be used to refer to oneself. In “Itsuki no Komori Uta,” the word used is “*odoma*.” The way adjectives are formatted in “Itsuki no Komori Uta” also points toward a specific dialect. While in standard Japanese adjectives tend to end on an [i] vowel, in Kumamoto dialect, it is more common to end adjectives with [ka], changing some words such as “*yoi*” meaning “good” into “*yoka*.”¹⁶⁶ This way of speaking is unique to the region and adds to the *furusato* element of the folksong.

Another noticeable difference in this folk song is the contraction of the syllable “*no*” at the ends of words. The word “*kimon*” in the piece is a contraction of the word “*kimono*” and the phrase, “*an hitotacha*,” would be “*ano hitotachi wa*,” meaning, “they are” or “those people are.” In the case of the second example, the contraction of “*no*” to

¹⁶⁴ It should be noted that even in Tokyo, colloquially spoken Japanese often contracts everyday words and phrases as well. For example, it is common to refer to MacDonald’s, pronounced, “*makudonarudo*” as “*makudo*.”

¹⁶⁵ Onishi, “35 Dialects of Japan,” 566.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid, 566.

“*n*” becomes an elision into the next syllable. In this dialect it is common to contract articles as well to the preceding syllable attached to a noun or verb. “*Hitotachi wa*” (“*wa*” being the article in this case) becomes, “*hitotacha*,” with the final syllable “*cha*” being a combination of “*chi*” and “*wa*.” Another example is in the “crying” chord progression of Sections C and C’ on the phrase “*Dai ga naita kuryū kya*,” (“Who will come crying [if I die]?”), in standard Japanese would be spoken as “*Dare ga naita kuru ka*.” The dialect changes the syllabic structure of the phrase from 9 syllables to 7. Contractions such as these are important to the verse and syllabic structure of the folk song. Since Japanese uses a syllabic alphabet, these contractions affect the rhythmic meter of the text. This means that changing the text to standard Japanese may not work as it would change the rhythmic syllabic structure of the folk song.

“*Itsuki no Komori Uta*” demonstrates Matsushita’s ability to seamlessly combine an original compositional idea, the “accompaniment figure,” with original folk material. “*Itsuki no Komori Uta*” stands out from the other pieces in this study due to its form. Rather than adhering to the typical verse structure of the original folk song, Matsushita rearranges certain sections to emphasize the melancholic story depicted in the folk song’s text. This structural reorganization is akin to his treatment of “*Aizu Bandaisan*” in a sense, which recapitulates the first verse. “*Itsuki no Komori Uta*” differs, however, by recapitulating fragments of verses rather than the whole. Similar to the other pieces in this dissertation, Matsushita designates a middle section to be developmental. In the case of “*Itsuki no Komori Uta*”, he overlays fragments of Verse 1 and 2 to initiate motion into Verse 3 and the climactic “crying figure” (Figure 22).

Harmonically, Matsushita progresses the piece in terms of complexity and dissonance. The beginning of the piece presents the melody clearly with minimal direct dissonance. By Verse 3 the harmonization of the melody becomes more dissonant and chromatic. This approach of beginning with more clarity and building dissonances allows the piece's folk material and character to be preserved throughout the entirety of the piece while also being able to increase interesting harmonic textures.

Other folk elements that Matsushita retains include the dialect of the text, *kobushi* ornamentation figures, and shifting meters to hint towards an *oiwake* styled *minyō* piece. "Itsuki no Komori Uta" is unique in the aspect of form but is representative of many of Matsushita's other compositional techniques and attitude.

Conducting and Rehearsal Considerations

"Itsuki no Komori Uta", despite the *divisi* throughout, is an achievable piece to sing for the intermediate to advanced treble choir. The voice leading by Matsushita is very natural and allows singers to navigate their parts intuitively. What is possibly most challenging about the piece is the forces required to sing it. "Itsuki no Komori Uta" calls for a wide vocal range within the choir, most notably in the lower *divisi* of the Alto 2 line, who are required to sing a low D at one point and are consistently utilizing notes on leggier lines below the staff. For the purposes of my lecture recital, we added tenors to the ensemble to sing the Alto 2 lines. This helped immensely with projection of these low pitches. The low pitches could be viewed as an incentive for directors who can utilize the lowest of their alto forces.

In learning the piece, a conductor may want to consider starting at first verse at measure 10 rather than the introduction. Since the introduction opens with a fragmentation of the melody, establishing familiarity with the melodic material first can help to contextualize the opening measures of the piece. This also provides ample opportunity to develop an interpretation for the accompaniment figure, which is used throughout the piece. Instilling articulations and dynamics are an efficient method to establishing a musical interpretation of the accompaniment figure that can be used in the remainder of the piece. Of course, a director may want to alter the accompaniment figure later based on their interpretation.

Two areas that present a challenge tonally are during measures 41–46 and measures 72–77. Both sections involve the crying figure and are part of a modulation. The first is easier than the second, but still can be difficult in terms of intervals and range. For example, the Soprano 2 line in measures 41–42 span a range of a low B to a D on the staff. The *ritenuto* and *crescendo* also add a layer of complexity as it can be challenging to add tempo and dynamic alterations when singers are focusing on the tonal complexity of the section. These can be overcome, however, with slow and thorough practice of the section. When doing so, it may be best to have singers mark vocally until they are comfortable with the pitches before adding dynamic growth.

Measures 72–77 relate to measures 41–46, but there are distinct differences that make it more challenging in performance. The two main factors that distinguish it from the former are the added rhythmic variation, notably the addition of a 3/8 measure, and the modulation occurring in the middle of the phrase rather than preceding it. Speaking

the text in rhythm proved to be an extremely effective tool for rehearsing this section. Harmonically, the phrase moves from A minor to C minor in measures 72–74. By rehearsing just the downbeats of measures 72 and 74, the choir can establish tonal landmarks that assist in the choir’s harmonic journey in this phrase.

A major strength of Matsushita’s arrangement of this folk song is how the melody is placed throughout the piece. He often trades the melody between voices, but it is natural to the rise and fall of the phrase shape. While Matsushita implements his own stylistic compositional ideas within the piece as demonstrated by the accompaniment figure, variations in texture, and changes to form, his treatment of “Itsuki no Komori Uta” innovatively places emphasis on the melodic line, which in my experience conducting the piece, causes singers to intuitively highlight its importance. Even though the melody is prioritized, care should still be taken to ensure its clarity throughout the piece.

Pronunciation and Translation

“Itsuki no Komori Uta”

おどま盆ぎり盆ぎり
Odoma Bon giri bon giri
[odoma bon giri bon giri]

I will be here until the time of *Bon*.

盆から先アおらんと
Bon kara sakya oranto
[bon kara sakja oranto]

Until *Bon* I am here.

盆が早よ来りゃ 早よ戻る
Bon ga hayo kurya hayo modoru
[bon ga hajo kurja hajo modoru]

The sooner *Bon* comes, the sooner I can return home.

おどまかんじんかんじん
Odoma kanjin kanjin
[odoma kandʒin kandʒin]

I am a poor slave, poor slave.

あん人達ア よか衆
An hitotacha Yokashū
[an hitotafja jokaʃu:]

Those people are my wealthy masters.

よか衆 よか帯 よか着物
Yokashū yoka obi yoka kimon
[jokaʃu: joka obi joka kimon]

Wealthy masters, fine sashes, and fine kimonos.

おどんが打死んちゅうて
Odon ga utchinchūte
[odon ga ut:tʃintʃu:tɛ]

When I die,

誰が泣いたくりゅうきや
Daiga naitakuryū kya
[daiga naita kuɾju: kja]

Who will cry for me?

裏の松山 蟬がなく
Ura no Matsuyama semi ga naku
[urano matsujama semi ga naku]

Only the cicadas on yonder hill.

蟬じゃござんせん妹でござる
Semi ja gozansen imōto de gozaru
[semi dʒa gozansen imo:to de gozaru]

It is not the cicadas crying, but my little sister.

妹泣くなよ 気にかかる
Imōto nakunayo kinikakaru
[imo:to nakunajo kinikakaru]

Oh, little sister, do not cry. It is hard to bear.

“Tsugaru Jongara-bushi”

Background

“Tsugaru Jongara-bushi” was written in 1996 and published in 2002 in the song set, *Nihon no Minyō Dai 3 Shu*, or *Japanese Folksongs 3: Compositions for Male Chorus* (English title). The song set was commissioned by the Tohkai Male Choir of Aichi

Prefecture,¹⁶⁷ and frequently performed by one of Matsushita's own groups, Ensemble Pleiade. The work is a setting of *tsugaru-jamisen*: a particular style of *shamisen* music from the northern Aomori Prefecture. The term, *tsugaru-jamisen*, is used to describe both the physical instrument as well as the genre of music hailing from this region. Unlike other forms of *shamisen* music, such as *nagauta* and *jiuta* which came out of "classical" court music in Edo, *tsugaru-jamisen* stems from *minyō*, or folk music.¹⁶⁸ It is mainly characterized by its virtuosic rhythms and fast-paced tempos. Other distinct elements of *tsugaru-jamisen* are the "percussive snapping and clicking of the *bachi*, or pick, as it strikes various points on the sound table,"¹⁶⁹ and the unique timbre associated with the sounds of Northern Honshu.

¹⁶⁷ Ko Matsushita, *Nihon no Minyō Dai 3 Shū* (2002; repr., Tokyo: edition Kawai, 2018).

¹⁶⁸ Keisuke Yamada, "Rethinking *Iemoto*: Theorizing Individual Agency in the *Tsugaru Shamisen Oyama-ryū*," *Asian Music* 48, no. 1 (2017): 35.

¹⁶⁹ McGoldrick, "The *Tsugaru-Jamisen*: Its Origins, Construction, and Music," 109.

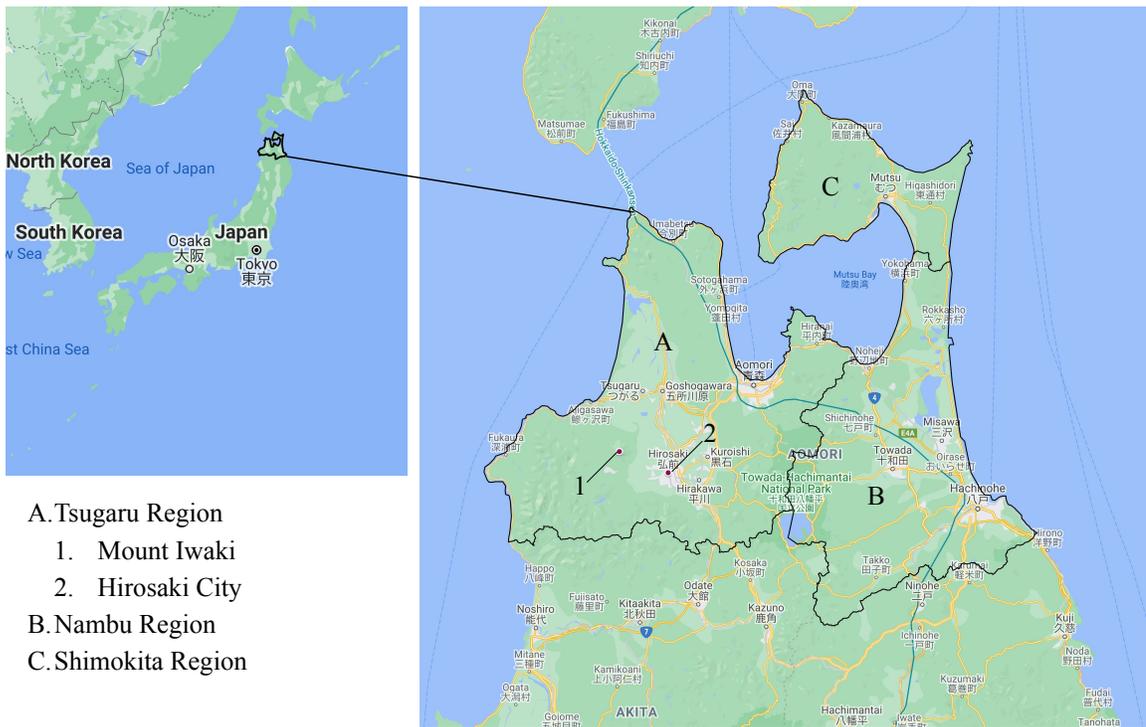


Figure 22: Map of Aomori Prefecture and Tsugaru Region¹⁷⁰

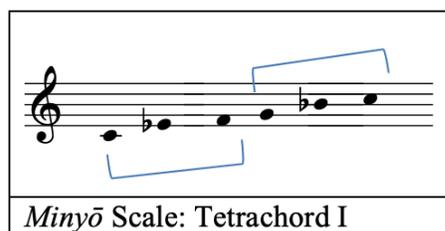


Figure 23: *Minyō* Pentatonic Scale

¹⁷⁰ “Map of Aomori Prefecture and its Three Regions,” Google Maps, accessed April 30, 2022, https://www.google.com/maps/d/u/0/edit?mid=1tz1ChM5LT3G-gMbIezUBb_uL-3eV3f0J&usp=sharing.

Tsugaru-jamisen music generally adheres to the *minyō* scale, the minor pentatonic scale as outlined by Koizumi’s method of scalar analysis for Japanese folk music (Figure 23).¹⁷¹ While “Tsugaru Jongara-bushi” uses this scale, *tsugaru-jamisen* playing often bends pitches flat or sharp so that parts of the melody occur outside of the pentatonic scale, causing the pieces to sound hexatonic or heptatonic at times. In *The Spirit of Tsugaru*, Groemer notates several versions of “Tsugaru Jongara-bushi” that appear to possess two or more sets of tetrachords, which causes the melody to sound heptatonic rather than pentatonic.¹⁷² Despite this, Groemer uses Koizumi’s method of scalar analysis to argue that *Tsugaru* scales are “fundamentally pentatonic,” with unstable pitches set within stable pitches that tend to be a perfect fourth apart.¹⁷³

The folksong can be traced back to the nineteenth century, originating as a ballad, but later developed into a virtuosic improvisatory piece by the twentieth century.¹⁷⁴ The melody and text of the ballad changed over time, and the form of the piece was adjusted for different performers to allow for sections of improvisation, which included signature techniques and ornamentation.

¹⁷¹ McGoldrick, 86; Koizumi’s method divides scales into tetrachords, the structures of which are comprised of a Perfect 4th and an inner note. The interval of the inner note from the nuclear tones, or *kakuon*, is what determines the quality of the tetrachord. The *minyō* scale is made of two *minyō* type tetrachords (Tetrachord I). For more detailed information, see Chapter 4: Elements of Japanese Folk Music, Scales.

¹⁷² Groemer, *The Spirit of Tsugaru*, 134–135.

¹⁷³ *Ibid*, 118.

¹⁷⁴ McGoldrick, 87.

One of the main developments that enhanced the popularity of *tsugaru-jamisen* music was its eventual use of the instrument in a solo setting. This contrasts with how *shamisen* is used in other parts of Japan, where it is typically an accompanying instrument to a singer in settings such as parlor songs. *Tsugaru-jamisen* players became known for their own unique interpretation of well-known folk tunes, which resulted in a plethora of versions of the same tune.

“Tsugaru Jongara-bushi” developed into multiple versions, with each player—famous or amateur—creating a unique adaptation. In fact, “Tsugaru Jongara-bushi” is credited with being the model on which “most modern *tsugaru-jamisen* improvisational playing is built.”¹⁷⁵ In the case of “Tsugaru Jongara-bushi,” there are three iterations of the folk tune that are identified in the repertoire: *Kyū bushi* (old song), *naka bushi* (middle song), and *shin bushi* (new song.)¹⁷⁶ All three versions of the tune are still present in the repertoire of today and are considered part of the canon of solo *tsugaru-jamisen* music.¹⁷⁷

The virtuosic and fast-paced playing style became very popular as certain players, such as Takahashi Chikuzan, reached celebrity status, and unique styles were cultivated among players as they all explored their individual interpretations. An example of this can be found in the modifications players would make to the form of the piece to fit their

¹⁷⁵ McGoldrick, 87.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid, 88.

distinct expression. Groemer, in *The Spirit of Tsugaru*, analyzes two versions of ‘Tsugaru Jongara-bushi’, ” one being a solo *shamisen* piece and other a vocal and *shamisen* piece—both performed by Takashi Chikuzan.¹⁷⁸ His analysis concluded that the solo *shamisen* version deviated greatly from the original tune, more so than the vocal and *shamisen* version, including structural changes in passages where “existing phrases are extended, new ones are interpolated, and entire strophes are compressed or undergo reorganization.”¹⁷⁹

Matsushita takes a similar approach in his choral arrangement of “Tsugaru Jongara-bushi” by condensing and expanding various sections in order to achieve his vocal interpretation of the *tsugaru-jamisen*. It is my interpretation that Matsushita is embracing the ideals of Tsugaru further by utilizing the concept of *kyokubiki*, which is best described as a performance that strays from the original form but is composed in a way to retain fundamentals of the original tune. In *Jongara*-based *kyokubiki* pieces, the defining elements that make it identifiable as such are duple meter, *niagari* tuning, and minor scales.¹⁸⁰

In addition to exploring rhythm, players also achieve various timbres, which facilitates his or her own personal expression of a piece. There are multiple placements

¹⁷⁸ Groemer, 147–152.

¹⁷⁹ McGoldrick, 88.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid*, 88–89.

and strengths the player can use to achieve different types of downstroke timbres.¹⁸¹ For example, a player may achieve different timbres on the same pitch by employing different playing techniques: strumming down with the *bachi*, strumming up with the *bachi*, plucking a string with the left hand, hammering down with one of the left hand's fingers, or using the left hand to dampen the sound. Right hand techniques include the standard down stroke and upstroke. The two most common ornamentations and techniques are *kamashi*, a pattern sequence of a strum by the *bachi* followed by a plucking by the left hand similar to a left-hand pizzicato, and *kobushi*, an elongation of melodic line by adding continually moving grace note figures.

Matsushita's version of "Tsugaru Jongara-bushi" is based on the *Kyū bushi* (old style) form of the folk tune, but with slight modifications to the notes in the scale, which makes it sound different at times to other versions of "Tsugaru Jongara-bushi". Both the *Kyū bushi* version and Matsushita's version use disjunct *minyō* tetrachords (Tetrachord I) but are placed differently.

In addition, the *Kyū bushi* version of the melody is built on three disjunct *minyō* tetrachords instead of two, causing it to sound heptatonic in moments. Another way to view this extra disjunct tetrachord is to claim it as bent, unstable, or ornamented pitches. When discussing the appearance of mixed scales in performances of *minyō*, Hughes notes, "in a pentatonic genre, the distance between pitches is much greater than in, say Western chromatic music, so even considerable latitude in intonation does not imperil the

¹⁸¹ McGoldrick, 74–78.

recognition or identity of a melody.”¹⁸² Either way, both Matsushita and the *Kyū bushi* versions use the *minyō* tetrachord as the basis of their scale. The *Kyū bushi* melody, notated by Groemer, is more ornamented with *kobushi* than Matsushita’s choral arrangement. Although Matsushita implements short *kobushi*-like figures, the melody still retains the essential characteristics of rhythm and melody in order to be recognized as the *Kyū bushi* tune.

¹⁸² Hughes, 37.

A. *Kyū bushi* sung by Asari Miki, King Records K20G-5046, notated by Gerald Groemer in *The Spirit of Tsugaru*. The excerpt is transposed down a whole step for easier comparison.¹⁸³

B. Melodic excerpt of measures 23–34 of Matsushita’s arrangement of “Tsugaru Jongara-bushi”.

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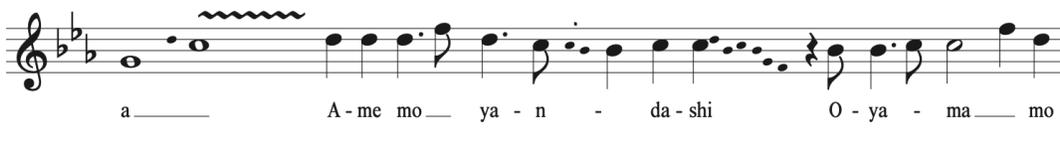
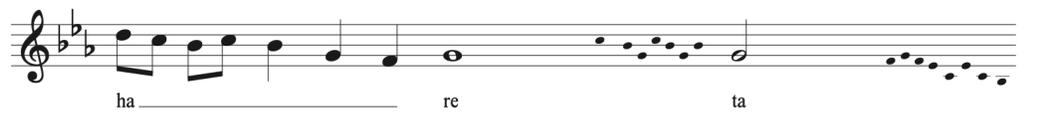
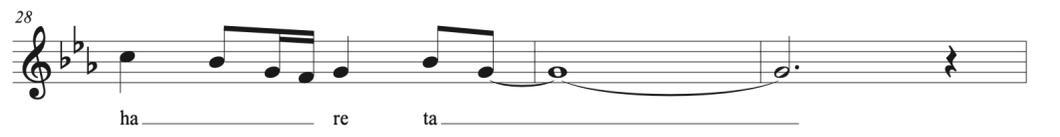
A	 <p>a ——— A - me mo — ya - n - da - shi O - ya - ma — mo</p>
B	<p>23</p>  <p>Ha ——— A - me mo ya - n - da - shi — O - ya - ma — mo</p>
A	 <p>ha ——— re ta</p>
B	<p>28</p>  <p>ha ——— re ta ———</p>
A	 <p>Mu - ra ——— wa ri - n - go de i ro - zu ki - so - me ta a</p>
B	<p>31</p>  <p>Mu - ra wa ri - n - go de i - ro - zu - ki - so - me - ta ———</p>

Figure 24: Melodic comparison between *Kyū Bushi* (Old Style) and Matsushita's Arrangement

¹⁸³ Groemer, 134–135.

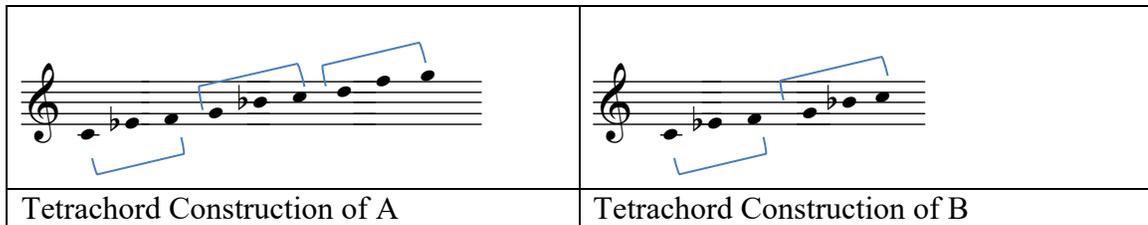


Figure 25: Tetrachord (*Minyō* type) scale construction of *Kyū Bushi* and Matsushita's arrangement.¹⁸⁴

Analysis

In analyzing Matsushita's choral version of "Tsugaru Jongara-bushi," it is important to consider the aforementioned stylistic elements. Matsushita emulates many of the timbral elements demonstrated in *tsugaru-jamisen* playing by his choice of syllables in what he defines as the "scat" portions of the piece, which are defined by fast-paced rhythms. The sung style is in *yagi-bushi*. His use of perfect intervals mirrors the *niagari* tuning (i.e., d-a-d) used for this folk tune. The overall form of the piece is tripartite, with the middle section being a slower and a dissonant setting of the text in comparison to the beginning and ending sections. The structure also matches how an interpretation of "Tsugaru Jongara-bushi" would be conceived, in sections or *dan*.¹⁸⁵

¹⁸⁴ The *Minyō* type Tetrachord is characterized by the presence of a minor 3rd interval from the base *kakuon* and the middle note, or infix. For more detail and information on Koizumi's method of scalar analysis and other types of Tetrachords, see "Chapter 4: Elements of Japanese Folk Song, Scales."

¹⁸⁵ McGoldrick, 112, 120.

Matsushita begins the piece in a typical *tsugaru-jamisen* manner, with the use of *choshi awase*, or “tuning section.” At the start of *tsugaru-jamisen* pieces, the player would open by striking the *bachi* on open strings in a specified sequence, and then tune while continuing to strum. Historically, this section would have also been used by *bōsama*, blind itinerant musicians, as they waited for someone to come to the door while standing in front of a house where they were about to play.¹⁸⁶ Once the tuning was complete, the player would perform a short rhythmic figure on the tuned open strings, which would mark the beginning of the piece.¹⁸⁷ Matsushita employs this concept of *choshi awase* into the opening measure of the piece (Figure 26).

¹⁸⁶ Groemer, 127.

¹⁸⁷ McGoldrick, 119.

The image shows a musical score for four vocal parts: Tenor I, Tenor II, Baritone, and Bass. The music is in 4/4 time with a tempo of approximately 140. The key signature has two flats. The lyrics for all parts are 'da ba da da da da ra ba'. The Tenor I part starts with a forte (*f*) dynamic. The Tenor II part starts with a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic. The Baritone and Bass parts start with a piano (*p*) dynamic. All parts converge to a forte (*f*) dynamic for the final notes.

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Figure 26: *Chōshi awase* gesture, mm 1–2 of “Tsugaru Jongara-bushi”.

From the opening “*choshi awase*” gesture, Matsushita outlines a C-based *minyō* scale.¹⁸⁸ This establishment of the mode is common in *kyokubiki* pieces, as it identifies the origins of the piece. “Tsugaru Jongara-bushi” is always set in a *minyō* scale, and by melodically presenting the scale in this manner, Matsushita defines the piece as *Jongara*-based composition. Another element that distinguishes the piece as *Jongara*-based is the simple duple feel, which Matsushita achieves with a 4/4 setting with stress on beats one and three.

¹⁸⁸ See Chapter 4: Elements of Japanese Folk Song, Scales.

In the first section of the piece, Matsushita treats the texture antiphonally, which can be interpreted as a representation of two *shamisen* playing at the same time. He then groups voices together in unison to act as a single *shamisen*. An example of this can be found after the *choshi awase*. Matsushita writes in a series of “call and response” type figures, starting on measure 3 and continuing through measure 23. In addition to the antiphonal textures he creates, his use of unisons and octaves divide the choir into two instruments.

The image shows a musical score for four voices, arranged in two pairs. The top pair consists of two staves in treble clef, and the bottom pair consists of two staves in bass clef. All staves are in the key of C minor (one flat) and 8/8 time. The music is marked with a forte dynamic (*f*). The lyrics are 'da da ra ba da da dabada dabada da da ba da'. The first staff has a '16' above it and an '8' below it. The second staff has an '8' below it. The third staff has an '8' below it. The fourth staff has a 'sub' marking at the end.

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Figure 27: Example of voice pairings in “Tsugaru Jongara-bushi”, mm 16–17.¹⁸⁹

A clear example of this can be found in measures 16–17 (Figure 27), where the tenors sing in unison an octave above the basses. The pairings do not stay exclusively in this format throughout the opening section, but it is an important aspect.

Harmonically, Matsushita keeps the opening mostly in a *minyō* scale, only straying away in a couple of moments at the close of the section, in measures 19 and 22. In measure 19, Matsushita introduces two new accidentals: $D\flat$ in the Bass and $A\flat$ in the Tenor 2 and Baritone. Combined with the Tenor 1 line, the resulting chord is a $D\flat$ major 7th, which in the piece’s tonality of C minor functions as a $bII-7$ th chord. The Bass then

¹⁸⁹ Matsushita, *Nihon no Minyō Dai 3 Shū*, 15.

moves to B \flat , resulting in a B \flat minor-7th chord. The sudden shift to a gesture more modern provides a sense of an impending cadence. Still, the original character of the tune is retained by Matsushita's use of moving parallel perfect 5ths in the Baritone and Bass—a distinguishing aspect of the style of the *tsugaru-jamisen*.

Rhythmically, measure 19 also provides contrast with its sudden use of dotted quarter to eighth notes patterns. This pre-cadential gesture in measure 19 is simply a setup for the actual cadence of the first section, or first “*dan*,” in measures 22–23, where all of the moving sixteenth-note and eighth-note figures resolve into three quarter notes on the “open strings” of C, G, and C.¹⁹⁰ Using a specific rhythmic figure to signal the end of a section is typical in *tsugaru-jamisen* playing. McGoldrick notes that “typical cadences are performed in a standard way, and pieces always end with the musician striking all the strings on the tonic.”¹⁹¹ While Matsushita adds in the fifth, the openness of the perfect interval between C and G are mimicking the cadential action of the *shamisen*.

After the first section, which was solely an imitation of the *tsugaru-jamisen*, Matsushita shifts gears to introduce the vocal elements of the piece with a solo Tenor entrance. He keeps the elements of *shamisen* mimicry, but as an accompaniment figure rather than the foreground. This second section, or second “*dan*,” is the first verse of text, and is an exploration on how to write *minyō*-styled singing in a choral setting. The

¹⁹⁰ Even though this is a choral piece, viewing the tonic and fifth as the open strings helps with the visualization of *shamisen* modeling.

¹⁹¹ McGoldrick, 122.

elongated “ha,” belongs to many vocal renditions of the folk song “Tsugaru Jongara-bushi,” and functions as a *kakegoe*.¹⁹²

In a typical folk performance, this would be sung in a style that many in the West would consider a nasal sound, but Hughes denounces that assessment, instead noting how a “tense throat does not seem to be characteristic” of Japanese folk voice quality.¹⁹³ The vocal quality can be described as bright and penetrating, as many folk songs in Japan would have traditionally been sung without amplification. This timbre may warrant consideration when performing Matsushita’s version. Folk singers tend to ornament this ascending 5th figure with the use of *kobushi*, or “little songs,” which is a crucial aspect of Japanese folk singing. Matsushita uses elements of *kobushi* in many of his compositions and arrangements based in Japanese folk music. *Kobushi* encompasses several vocal ornamentations, including—but not limited to—simple changes in pitches such as grace-note figures. Matsushita keeps a straightforward approach with pitch from measures 23-25 but does mark a decrescendo followed by a crescendo. Dynamic contrast is a major element in *tsugaru-jamisen* and is reflected here in the vocal production.¹⁹⁴

¹⁹² *Kakegoe* refers to a preparatory vocal “call” to attention. It is usually used to signal a musical phrase, shift of strings, or change in section.

¹⁹³ Hughes, 32.

¹⁹⁴ McGoldrick, 109.

23
Ha _____ A-me mo ya-n - da-shi _____ O-ya - ma _____ mo

28
ha _____ re ta _____

31
Mu-ra wa ri - n - go de i - ro - zu - ki - so - me - ta _____

Figure 28: Tenor 1 Melody and *kobushi*-like ornamentations for “Tsugaru Jongara-bushi”, mm 23–34

Starting in measure 25, Matsushita introduces the main melody in the Tenor 1 line and keeps it there for the majority of the first verse. Analysis of the melodic line shows Matsushita’s dedication to preserving the character of this folk song. As with many of his other folk-based pieces, his treatment of melody is consistent with his philosophy of prioritizing the folk tune and character. This is confirmed by his use of grace notes and melodic fragments that function as *kobushi*, which is essential to this style.

In comparison to a traditional singing of “Tsugaru Jongara-bushi”, Matsushita’s number of ornamentations will seem quite conservative, but excessively ornamenting may be detrimental to the choral piece in this case. Instead, he offers a balance, providing enough to encapsulate the feeling of Tsugaru while maintaining a sense of ensemble in the choir.

Phrase A

ハ — — あめも — やん — だし —
Ha — — A - me mo ya - n - da - shi —

おやま — も は — — れ た —
O - ya - ma — mo ha — — re ta —

Phrase B

Phrase C

むら は り ん — ご で いろ — づき そ — め た
Mu - ra wa ri - n - go de i - ro - zu - ki - so - me - ta —

あねこ ほ か むり — きもい そい — そと
A - ne - ko ho - ka - mu - ri — Ki mo I - so - i - so - to —

Figure 29: Phrase Structure of Verse 1, “Tsugaru Jongara-bushi”, mm 24–38.

In terms of the phrase structure, the melody can be broken into three sections: Phrase A (mm 25–30), Phrase B (mm 31–34), and Phrase C (35–38). Phrases A and B are carried in the Tenor 1 line. In Phrase C, Matsushita shifts responsibility to the Baritone line in measures 35 and 36 but reverts the melody back to the Tenor 1 line at measure 37. Each phrase is a 14-syllable structure and can be further divided into two seven-syllable sets, creating a 7+7 syllabic structure.

Matsushita progresses the harmony in this section, starting with harmony based purely on the minor pentatonic scale, then later adding auxiliary tones. By introducing non-scale tones gradually, he organically shifts from pentatonic harmony to something more contemporary. The first of these non-scalar tones happens at measure 33, where the

Baritone and Bass sing an Ab in octaves, the culmination of a descending line that begins at measure 31 (Figure 30). The descending parallel octaves and the dotted quarter-note to eighth-note rhythm is enough to keep this harmonic line feel true to the *tsugaru-jamisen* style. In addition to the parallel octaves, the first tenors sing an Eb on the down beat of measure 33, a perfect fifth above the Ab in the Bass and Baritone. The introduction of non-scalar tones in perfect intervals, especially octaves and fifths, incorporates modern harmony without betraying the iconic *tsugaru-jamisen* sound.

32

り んご で い ろづ き そ めた
Ri - n - go de I - ro - zu - ki - so - me - ta

dabada da da ba da dabada da da ba da dabada da da ba da dabada da dabada da

り んご で い ろづ き そ めた あね コ
Ri - n - go de I - ro - zu - ki - so - me - ta A - ne - ko

り んご で い ろづ き そ めた あね コ
Ri - n - go de I - ro - zu - ki - so - me - ta A - ne - ko

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Figure 30: Introduction of non-scalar tones in “Tsugaru Jongara-bushi”, mm 32–35.

36 *mf*

気 も い そ い - - - そ と
 Ki mo I - so - i - - - so to

da ba da da da ba da da da ba da da い - そ い - - - そ と
 I - so - i - - - so to

ほ か - む り - 気 も い そ い - - - そ と
 Ho - ka - mu - ri - Ki mo I - so - i - - - so to

ほ か む り 気 も い そ い - - - そ
 Ho - - - ka - mu - - - ri Ki mo I - so - i - - - so

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Figure 31: Ending of Verse 1 with non-scale tones marked, “Tsugaru Jongara-bushi”, mm 36–38.

The next non-scalar tone, D, occurs at the end of Verse 1 in measure 36, and is also presented in a stepwise descending bass line (Figure 31). The descending stepwise motion can be seen as an extension of the one appearing in measures 31–34. The first descent of the bass begins on the tonic, C, and the second descent begins on the fifth, G, resulting in a harmonic journey that emphasizes the tonic and transitions to emphasize the dominant.

The introduction of the non-scalar tone in measure 36 leads to more adventurous harmonic progression. The D in the Bass in measure 36 is used as the foundation of a first-inversion G minor chord on beats 3 and 4. From this point, Matsushita adds more non-scalar tones, and starts a sequence of seventh and cluster chords on measures 37 and

38 that he uses as a cadence in the first verse. Matsushita builds dissonance upon the folk melody with each of the chords in this cadential figure.

The first cluster chord, starting on beat three of measure 37, is a C minor 7th chord in third inversion (C minor ^{4/2}). It is interesting to note that the pitches in this chord are part of the minor pentatonic scale being used. The next chord, on the downbeat of measure 38, adds an A \flat in the Bass and Tenor 2, forming an A \flat major-7th chord and emphasizing the 6th scale degree in the Bass. On beat two, Matsushita adds a D \flat in the top not of a Tenor 2 split, building a B \flat minor-7th chord, which is not only non-scalar, but also not part of the C minor tonality. On beat three, Matsushita goes further to disrupt the tonality and places an F \sharp in the Baritone. This is the first cluster chord of the piece—a combination of G \flat major (assuming F \sharp being used for an enharmonic of G \flat) and A \flat major (Figure 34). In addition to the intensifying rhythmic and dynamic context, this cluster chord contributes to a building tension musically. This appears to be Matsushita mirroring the text in those measures, “*Ki mo Isoiso to,*” which roughly translates to “an overwhelming rush of joy” or “feeling free.” The tension being built through the use of dissonance in this closing phrase could be interpreted as intensifying excitement, and a sudden simple-octave C and G on beat four functions as a release, as Matsushita shifts the choral writing back into a *tsugaru-jamisen* mode from measures 39–46.

The third section (Verse 2) of the piece functions as a contrast to the rest of the piece, something Matsushita states that he tends to do with middle sections.¹⁹⁵ In

¹⁹⁵ Matsushita, interview by author.

“Tsugaru Jongara-bushi”, he writes the second verse in a tonally developmental way, demonstrating an affinity towards minor 7th chords, diminished chords, and interesting harmonic shifts. He employs these tools to venture through multiple tonal centers to seamlessly modulate from C minor to D minor.

Rhythmically, Verse 2 moves away from the driving pattern of the *tusgaru-jamisen* imitations and instead ventures into slower-paced rhythms and more Western-based polyphonic writing. For example, starting at measure 49, Matsushita writes what could be seen as a canon between the Bass and the Tenor 2, with the Bass starting on the dominant scale degree and the Tenor 2 responding with the tonic. The relationship between those two becomes clearer when shifting the Tenor 2 line to start at the same time as the Bass, as shown in Figure 32.

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The canon in Verse 2 is observed between Bass 2 and Tenor 2 in mm 49–53.

A representation of the harmonic relationship between the Tenor 2 and Bass 2 lines during the canon.

Figure 32: Harmonic representation of the canon in Verse 2, mm 49–53.

Both lines stay in the C minor *minyō* scale of “*Tsugaru Jongara-bushi*” and maintain perfect fourth and fifth intervals, with the exception being when they avoid perfect intervals to preserve the scale. They almost perfectly mirror the melody at a perfect fourth apart, making it obvious that they are carrying the melodic subject matter. When comparing it to Verse 1, it is easy to see that Matsushita is utilizing Phrase A in this short canon. The Tenor 1 and Baritone lines are singing related subject material but are not bound by the melody subject in the same way in terms of pitch and rhythm. The Tenor 1 line is used to keep the motion of the phrase moving upward—appropriate

considering the text: “*Oyama kaketa yo,*” or “up in the mountains.” Matsushita even stacks the voices from low to high, creating an aural image of a mountain.

Much like in the first verse, Matsushita does not utilize non-scalar tones in the first phrase of the second verse through measure 53. At measure 54, however, Matsushita becomes more adventurous with the harmony, writing in a C \flat in the Bass, an A \flat in the Tenor 2, and resolving the Tenor 1 from G to F, creating a first-inversion F diminished chord to accompany the melody in the Baritone. Matsushita uses this moment to start transposing Phrase B of the melody to E \flat and completes the transition once the Tenor 2 line takes over the melody from the Baritone. He provides continuity with his earlier statement of Phrase A in Verse 2 by relying on imitative textures, although he does not go into a full statement of Phrase B in canon; rather, he keeps a slow, imitative texture that passes the melody between Tenor 2 and Baritone.

Measures 58–67 set Phrase C, starting by shifting harmonically to B minor before setting up the final modulation to D minor. Measures 58–59 are especially interesting, as they contain elements of both Phrase C (the primary melodic material at this point) and the end of Phrase B, likely to reflect in the text of the Tenor 2 and Bass harmony. The text in Phrase B roughly translates to, “From Mt. Iwaki, if you look closely,” and Phrase C translates to, “through a familiar window.” The word for “if you see,” *mitara*, is sustained in the Tenor 2 and Bass. It is as if the layering of Phrase B is providing the vision through the glass of for the first part of Phrase C.

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Figure 33: Octave pairing between B1 and T1 in "Tsugaru Jongara-bushi" Verse 2, mm 58–60.

Harmonically, the B minor tonality from 58–59 is unstable, but Matsushita seems to remedy the instability by doubling the melody for the first time in Verse 2 in the Baritone and Tenor 1 (Figure 33). This provides familiarity in a tonally unsteady place. In addition to the melody in octaves, Matsushita pairs the Tenor 2 and Bass lines, which are both singing the exact longer rhythmic values that contrast against the melody's rhythm. The decrease in imitative texture also makes the chordal shift to a G minor-7th clear on the downbeat of measure 60, marking the ultimate trend toward D minor. G minor here could be viewed as its own tonal center, but it is more likely functioning as a pre-dominant chord for D minor, as the melody at this point is in D minor as well.

Table 4: Harmonic and Textural Summary of Verse 2 in "Tsugaru Jongara-bushi."

Measures:	49–53	54–55	56–57	58–59	60–61	62–63	64–67
Phrase:	A	B	B	B+C	C	C	C
Tonal Area:	C minor	F dim.	E ^b minor	B minor	G minor	A minor	D minor
Treatment of Melody:	Canon	Imitation	Imitation	Octaves	Solo	Imitation	Imitation
	c: i	vii ^o /iii	iii		d: iv	v	i

Matsushita's setting of the melody in Verse 2 has shifted from canon in Phrase A, to imitation in Phrase B, and in parallel octaves at the start of Phrase C. The longest section in Verse 2 is the setting of Phrase C. While Matsushita wrote in closer imitation for both Phrases A and B, he instead writes two entire statements of Phrase C, the first from measures 58–61 and the second from 62–66. Having modulated from B minor to D minor in the first statement, the second statement remains in that tonality. The underlying harmonic accompaniment it is A minor, but it functions as a dominant tonality to D minor. Furthermore, when comparing the scale degrees of this statement of Phrase C in Verse 2 (in D minor) to Phrase C in Verse 1 (in C minor), it is easy to see that D minor is the new tonic. This is reaffirmed in measure 64, which finally lands on a D minor chord and sustained to the end of Verse 2.

The harmonic journey in Verse 2 is an example of Matsushita's more contemporary choral writing. He mentioned in his interview that he likes chords that can be "jazzy," and this is apparent in Verse 2 with his use of minor 7th chords, especially when the 7th is placed in the Bass, such as the third-position B minor-7th chord found on

beats 3 and 4 of measure 59.¹⁹⁶ His contemporary treatment of harmony in Verse 2, however, does not detract from the main essence of the folk tune. With the exception of a few modulatory places, Matsushita manages to keep the melodic phrases in a minor pentatonic scale. By using imitation, he is also able to rearticulate the melody in ways that compliment what is happening harmonically, often modulating the scale in conjunction with the chord changes. Employing these compositional tools allows Matsushita to obscure the modulation from C minor to D minor, making it a surprise when the choir lands a whole step higher for the recapitulation at measure 68.

Rhythmically, Matsushita layers the end of Verse 2 by bringing back the rhythmic pattern of the *Tsugaru-jamisen* in the crescendo of quarter note pulses culminating in two sixteenth notes in measures 66 and 67. This can be seen as a reference to the “*choshi awase*” from the beginning of the piece, but this time, the voices are “tuning” for D minor instead of C minor.

The last section of the piece is a recapitulation of the Introduction and Verse 1. He condenses the material from the Introduction into 10 measures, and then goes straight into Verse 3, which uses the same musical material from Verse 1. Finally, Matsushita adds a short Coda at the end of the piece starting at measure 95. The piece ends in the same manner that the original *tsugaru-jamisen* tune would end: all voices strumming the open tonics at octaves.¹⁹⁷

¹⁹⁶ Matsushita, interview by author.

¹⁹⁷ McGoldrick, 122.

The form of Matsushita's arrangement follows *tsugaru-jamisen* conventions. There is an opening *choshi awase* followed by five distinct sections. In *tsugaru-jamisen* music, these sections would be referred to as *dan*, with each *dan* typically following a pattern of starting in a lower register, going to a higher register in the middle, and then descending back down again at the end.¹⁹⁸ Each *dan* has a sense of growth "and the accelerating, rhythmically dense pre-cadential patterns always end it."¹⁹⁹ Based on the analysis, it is my conclusion that Matsushita's arrangement follows this stylistic convention, and opens every section with either an ascending interval, ascending scale, or ascension in vocal entrances from low voices to higher voices, as is the case in the canon-like structure of Verse 2. The melodic contour at the end of each verse also descends in a declamatory manner, matching this arching aesthetic. While Matsushita's arrangement generally follows this arch shape for each *dan*, there are a couple exceptions, notably the lack of a strong descension at the ends of verses 1 and 3, both of which end with wide voicings and Tenors in their upper register. Despite those exceptions, the consistent use of an ascending figure to open each *dan* is congruent with structural conventions of *tsugaru-jamisen* music. This, in addition to the use of pre-cadential rhythmic patterns to conclude each *dan*, is what makes Matsushita's arrangement sound authentic to the style. Table 5 below outlines each *dan* in Matsushita's arrangement and their opening characteristics.

¹⁹⁸ McGoldrick, 120.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid, 122.

Table 5: Form of "Tsugaru Jongara-bushi" in *dan* and relation to *Jo-ha-kyū*.

<i>Jo-ha-kyū</i> :	<i>Jo</i> (introduction)		<i>Ha</i> (break)		<i>Kyū</i> (acceleration)	
	Section or <i>dan</i> :	<i>Choshi Awase</i>	<i>Dan</i> 1: A	<i>Dan</i> 2: Verse 1 + Interlude	<i>Dan</i> 3: Verse 2	<i>Dan</i> 4: A”
Opening:	Ascending perfect intervals (Octaves and 5 th)	Ascending scale	Ascending perfect 4 th ; Ascending perfect intervals	Ascending vocal entrances of a perfect 4 th	Ascending scale	Ascending perfect 4 th
Measures:	1	2-23	24-38; 39-46	47-67	68-77	78-92; 93-99

Within each *dan* there can be multiple divisions as well that are also marked by an ascending figure. The most noticeable of these subsections come at the end of Verse 1, which features a short conclusionary interlude, and in Verse, 3 where Matsushita adds in a short codetta to end the piece.

McGoldrick argues that the structural organization found in *tsugaru-jamisen* music, particularly *Jonkara kyokubiki* pieces, is reflective of the Japanese artistic aesthetic of *jo-ha-kyū*.²⁰⁰ The *Jo* (introduction) is the *chōshi awase* and the following introductory material found in *Dan* 1;²⁰¹ the *Ha* (break) could be seen as encompassing

²⁰⁰ Ibid, 119.

²⁰¹ McGoldrick argues that the *chōshi awase* alone would be considered the *Jo* section, but Matsushita’s *chōshi awase* is so short that it is more logical to include *Dan* 1 as part of the introduction. Another reason to include *Dan* 1 with the *Jo* is its lack of lyrics. Its main purpose is to convey a vocal representation of the *Tsugaru-jamisen* as an instrument and to “set the stage.” *Dan* 1 clearly holds an introductory function, which gives it justification to be included in the *Jo*.

Dan 2 and *Dan 3* as they both toy with form, develop melodic and harmonic material, and contain the first two verses of storytelling found in the song; and the *Kyū* (acceleration) is the recapitulation of A material found in *Dan 4* continuing into *Dan 5*, and to the end. Matsushita has not stated that he had *Jo-ha-kyū* in mind when composing “Tsugaru Jongara-bushi”, but his comments about how he approaches form align well with *Jo-ha-kyū* aesthetics.²⁰² Matsushita creates contrast and variety within his compositions through changes in rhythm, harmonic dissonance, and texture in different sections. “Tsugaru Jongara-bushi” exhibits Matsushita’s compositional approach and is highly emblematic of his outlook on form.

In addition to the form, vocal imitations of *shamisen* techniques are present throughout Matsushita’s version of “Tsugaru Jongara-bushi”. Matsushita’s choice of syllables, which he refers to as “scat,”²⁰³ can be interpreted as various right hand *bachi* striking techniques or left hand plucking and hammering techniques (see Table 6). “Da” comes off as the strongest attack and can be interpreted as representing the timbre of the *bachi*’s downstroke on the strings. “Ba” is slightly weaker in attack, resembling the *bachi*’s upstroke (or *sukui*), or even possibly a left-hand pluck (or *hajiki*). “Ra”, pronounced with a flipped “r,” has the weakest attack, and can embody several muted techniques found in *tsugaru-jamisen*, such as *nezumi* or *komazuke*, in which the pinky of

²⁰² Matsushita, interview by author.

²⁰³ Matsushita, interview by author; Matsushita, *Nihon no Min'yō Dai 3 Shū*.

the right hand is placed on the bridge to dampen the soundboard.²⁰⁴ A common practice in *tsugaru-jamisen* playing is to employ these techniques to create a dynamically- and articulatory-diverse performance. The contrast in attack between “da,” “ba,” and “ra” should be emphasized when performing this piece to accurately portray the variety of timbral characteristics present in *tsugaru-jamisen* music.

In Matsushita’s arrangement, there is a prevalent rhythmic figure throughout the piece: two sixteenth notes followed by an eighth note. The figure is reminiscent of a distinct figure in *tsugaru-jamisen* known as *kamashi*, which is a playing sequence that involves striking with the *bachi* and plucking with the left hand (*hajiki*) to create a flourishing effect. A common *kamashi* pattern is notated in *shamisen* music as a 4-3-0-0 pattern.²⁰⁵ This can be seen in Matsushita’s version starting on beat two of measure three, where the *kamashi*-like figure is sounding the pitches of C (fourth *tsubo*), B \flat (third *tsubo*), and G (open string). Matsushita’s choices of syllables also match this *kamashi* gesture as well. The “da” is the downstroke, the “ba” is the *hajiki*, and the following “da”

²⁰⁴ McGoldrick, 76–77; “*Shamisen no hikikata*,” *Ajia no Gakkizukan*, Koizumi Memorial Archives, 2008, https://www.geidai.ac.jp/labs/koizumi/asia/jp/japan/shami_tsugaru/03.html.

²⁰⁵ Ibid, 78; The numbers represent the stop or placement of a finger on a string (known as *tsubo*). To set up this pattern, the player would place the ring finger on the 4th *tsubo* and the index finger on the 3rd *tsubo*. The player would strike down on the string, sounding the 4th *tsubo*, and then follow by plucking the same string with the ring finger. Since the index finger is placed on the string during the pluck, or *hajiki*, the 3rd *tsubo* is sounded. The player then releases the index finger and strikes up (*sukui*) on the same string, sounding an open string. The player could end it there, or then with the index finger, pluck (*hajiki*) the open string. Pitch wise, this sequence would sound the fourth and third intervals above an open string.

is the *sukui*. Matsushita continues employing these *kamashi*-like figures throughout, using it on the other “strings” in the choir.

Table 6: *Tsugaru-jamisen* techniques represented in vocables.

Technique	Description	syllable(s) used	Example
Jaku/Nezumi	soft downstroke, string struck at upper edge of soundboard	“ra,” “ba”	
Kyō	strong downstroke, string struck in center of soundboard by the bridge	“da”	
Sukui	upstroke	“da,” “ba”	
Suberi	downstroke technique where the <i>bachi</i> “slips” onto the next string after striking the primary string.	“ba”	
Bachizuke/Kyōjaku	alternating pattern of strong and weak strikes	“da da ra ba”	
Hajiki	plucking the string with a finger from the left hand.	“ba”	
Nuki and Kamashi	a distinctive sequence of strikes and plucks found in <i>Tsugaru-jamisen</i> playing: Downstroke - Left Hand Pluck (<i>hajiki</i>) - Upstroke (<i>sukui</i>) - (Left Hand Pluck (<i>hajiki</i>))	“da ba da”	

Ko Matsushita TSUGARU JONGARA BUSHI © 2002 by edition KAWAI. Assigned 2017 to Zen-On Music Co., Ltd. All Rights Reserved. Used by permission of European American Music Distribution Company, U.S. and Canadian agent for Zen-On Music., Ltd., Japan

“Tsugaru Jongara-bushi” is a reflection on what Matsushita considers important in a choral piece based in Japanese folk music. The essential character is not to be lost or obscured in the artistic expression of the composition. Matsushita manages to seamlessly marry his individual creativity with the source material through his diligent retention of the key elements of *tsugaru-jamisen* music, including rhythm, scale, form, playing techniques represented in vocables, and vocal ornamentations of the melody.

Conducting and Rehearsal Considerations

Matsushita emphasizes rhythm as an important aspect of this piece, making articulation a key component to delivering the character of the piece. It would be best to listen to the *tsugaru-jamisen* before introducing the piece to a choir, in order to understand its unique sound. As a plucked instrument, the articulation of the *tsugaru-jamisen* is a harder attack followed by a slight decay. This is better visualized with the spectrograph (Figure 34) of an excerpt of a performance of “Tsugaru Yosare Bushi.”²⁰⁶

²⁰⁶ Kikuchi Tetsuo, Hasegawa Yūji, et al, “Tsugaru Yosare Bushi,” *CD Accompanying: Traditional Folksong in Modern Japan* by David W. Hughes, Global Oriental, 2008, CD.

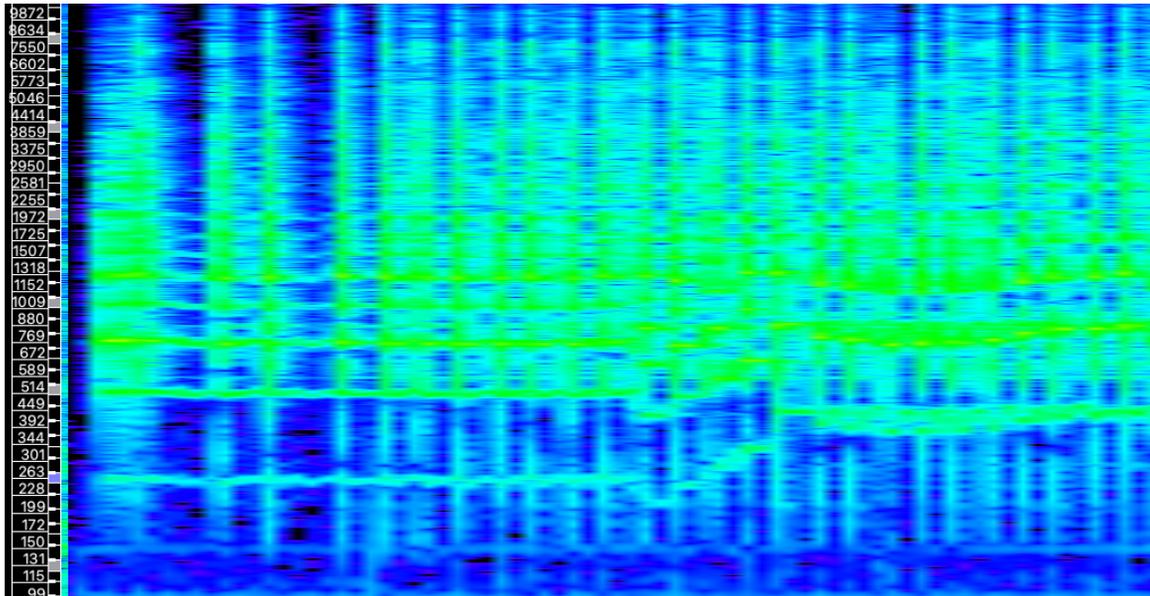


Figure 34: Spectrogram of *tsugaru-jamisen* playing. Image produced using Sonic Visualiser application.²⁰⁷

The percussive onset of tone is visualized by the strong vertical lines seen in the spectrograph, and the decay is observed by the thinning horizontal lines. Choir members should strive to mirror this type of shape when singing the piece and avoid singing the piece with a heavy sustain through each of the vocables, as demonstrated by the strong thick horizontal bands seen in the spectrograph in Figure 35.

²⁰⁷ Chris Cannam, Christian Landone, and Mark Sandler, *Sonic Visualiser: An Open Source Application for Viewing, Analysing, and Annotating Music Audio Files*, in Proceedings of the ACM Multimedia 2010 International Conference.

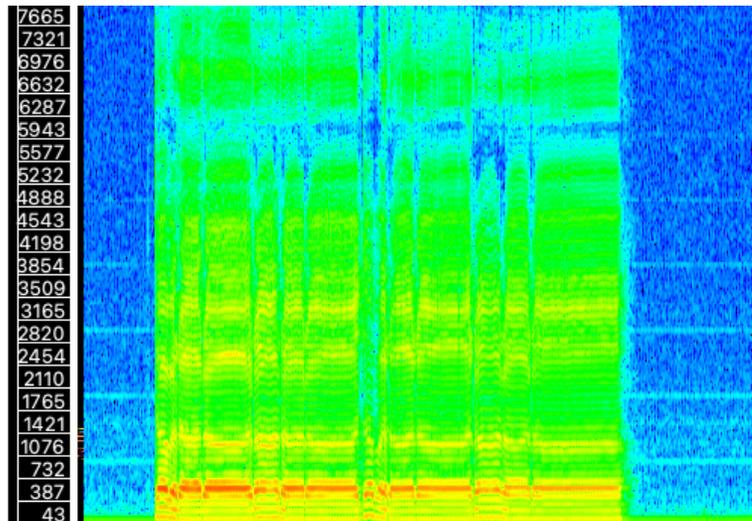


Figure 35: Spectrograph of poor vocal interpretation of *tsugaru-jamisen*. Image produced by recording the author’s voice while using Sonic Visualiser application.²⁰⁸

Singers should be encouraged to sing the *tsugaru-jamisen* figures with a slight accent, which is easily achieved by instructing the choir to emphasize the consonants in the “scat” sections. Also, for the small timbral differences of the emulated *tsugaru-jamisen* playing techniques to happen, choirs must strive to sing the correct vocables. This is challenging with a piece that contains quick rhythms and a fast tempo, but the achieved effect is well worth it.

There are voicing considerations that a conductor may want to take if performing the piece. The first occurs during verses 1 and 3. With the *divisi* in the tenors, particularly the Tenor 2 line, it may make more sense for the Tenor 1 line to be sung by a soloist, while the remainder of the Tenor 1 section sings the upper split of the Tenor 2 line. This approach is useful when the work is being sung by a smaller size Tenor and Bass

²⁰⁸ Ibid.

ensemble but may not work for larger ensembles. A similar revoicing approach can be taken at the end of each verse (mm 45–46, mm 98–99) when dealing with the upper split in the baritone *divisi*. Having a group of Tenor 2 singers join the upper Baritone pitches can solve issues regarding balance in the inner voices. The remainder of the Tenor 2 singers are singing in a higher tessitura and will still be present in the balance of voices.

Harmonically, the most challenging section of the piece is Verse 2. Matsushita composes this section polyphonically, and at first glance in the score, it can seem reminiscent of Renaissance part writing, albeit much more dissonant and chromatic. With layered entrances of the melody at different at scale degrees, a useful rehearsal approach is to have each voice only sing the first two measures of each entrance, particularly in measures 54–59 on the text “*Iwaki yama kara.*” Emphasizing linear horizontal motion of the phrasing in each voice may be a more successful approach than focusing on vertical harmonic shifts.

In terms of conducting gestures, the piece is rather straightforward. Using a 4/4 pattern with a slight punch on accented beats should draw the desired percussive energy of the *tsugaru-jamisen* from the ensemble. There are some interesting conducting challenges, however, that may present an opportunity to explore more freedom away from a strict 4/4 pattern.

In the transition from Verse 1 into Verse 2, the Baritones are left sustaining a G followed by two chords sung by the Tenors in measures 47 and 48. All of this is also marked with a *molto ritardando*. When rehearsing and performing the piece, an approach that I found success with was to dictate each of the three elements: the sustained G, chord

1, and chord 2. This allowed for total freedom from time, making the *molto ritardando* clearer to the ensemble. Once Verse 2 starts at measure 49, the 4/4 pattern should resume.

Another notable conducting challenge is at the end of the piece, where Matsushita composes an interesting division of meter in measure 97, marking in the score as $\frac{3+3+2}{8}$.

It is not necessary to divide the conducting pattern to match this grouping, as the syncopation in the lower three voices is not too difficult; however, using a three-beat conducting pattern in this measure that matches Matsushita's meter marking will make it easier to accent the syncopation, which I believe is Matsushita's intent.

“Tsugaru Jongara-bushi” is a high energy and entertaining piece, especially for the performers. The main consideration to take when performing the piece is to remember Matsushita's philosophy on preserving the character of the folk music, and delivering the emulated *tsugaru-jamisen* sounds to achieve that goal.

Pronunciation and Translation

“Tsugaru Jongara-bushi”

ハアー雨もやんだし

Ha, ame mo yandashi

[ha: amɛ mo jandʌʃi]

Ha, the rain has stopped

お山も晴れた

O yama mo hareta

[o jama mo hareta]

And it's cleared off the mountains,

村はりんごで

Mura wa ringo de

[mura wa riŋgo dɛ]

The village with apples

色づきそめた <i>Iro zuki someta</i> [iro zuiki someta]	is getting all colored.
姉コほかむり <i>Aneko hokamuri</i> [aneko hokamuuri]	The women covering their heads with scarves
気もいそいそと <i>Ki mo isoiso to</i> [ki mo isoiso to]	are cheerful.
ハアー お山かけたよ <i>Ha, o yama kaketa yo</i> [ha: o jama kaketa jo]	Ha, the mountains where
いい山かけた <i>Ii yama kaketa</i> [i: jama kaketa]	dwell the good mountains.
岩木山から <i>Iwakiyama kara</i> [iwakijama kara]	When from Mt. Iwaki
よくよく見たら <i>Yoku yoku mitara</i> [joku joku mitara]	I looked out
なじみ窓コで <i>Najimi madoko de</i> [nadzimi madoko de]	Her at a familiar window
お化粧の最中 <i>Okeshou no saichuu</i> [okejo: no saitjuuu]	I see her doing her make up.
ハアー 津軽良いところ <i>Ha, Tsugaru yoi toko</i> [ha tsugaruu joi toko]	Ha, Tsugaru is a nice place

お山が高く <i>O yama ga takaku</i> [o jama ga takaku]	The mountains are tall (magnificent)
水がきれいで <i>Mizu ga kirei de</i> [mizu ga kire: de]	Where the water is clear
女が良くて <i>Onna ga yoku te</i> [on na ga joku te]	The girls/women are nice/good
声が自慢の <i>Koe ga jiman no</i> [koe ga dziman no]	The proud voice of
じょんがら節よ <i>Jongara bushi yo</i> [dzongara buʃi jo]	Jongara-bushi!

“Kotoba-asobi Uta”

Background

“Kotoba-asobi Uta” is written for a treble choir or children’s choir and is a popular contest piece at choral festivals. The title translates to “word play song,” and can be considered to fall under the genre of *warabe uta* or children’s song. Many of these types of children’s songs were written during the Meiji and Showa eras in Japan and were used to teach children things like numbers and the alphabet. Often these songs were involved in some form of playing, whether specifically as a game or as another activity such as

“Yubikiri kenman,” a Japanese version of a pinky promise.²⁰⁹ According to Kishimoto, *warabe uta* refer to songs passed down through children,” and are usually used to describe songs sung during play.²¹⁰ He elaborates,

“Since these songs were passed to children by parents, many of these songs can (and were) used to learn how to count, pray, solve mathematical equations, learn proper grammar, or learn about culture. As such, most melodies use pentatonic scales and are quite simple to sing and learn.”²¹¹

In “Kotoba-asobi Uta,” Matsushita combines three children’s songs into this single work and ties them all together with an original repeated motivic idea used throughout the piece. The text has a playful nature, similar to tongue-twisters found in English (such as “Peter Piper”) which explains the title of “word play song,” and Matsushita elaborates on that musically. The first tune used in the piece is “Sōga-mura no sonchō-san,” a popular *warabe-uta* in Japan often taught to elementary school students. The second tune, “Jūjaike-ni,” is about a giant snake at the bottom of *Jūja* pond and is the only portion of the piece not in an irregular meter. The third tune, “Bero-bero no Kamisama,” is a silly song about the “God of the Drunkards.” It is here that Matsushita begins to venture into uses of dissonance, which matches the unsteady and bawdy nature

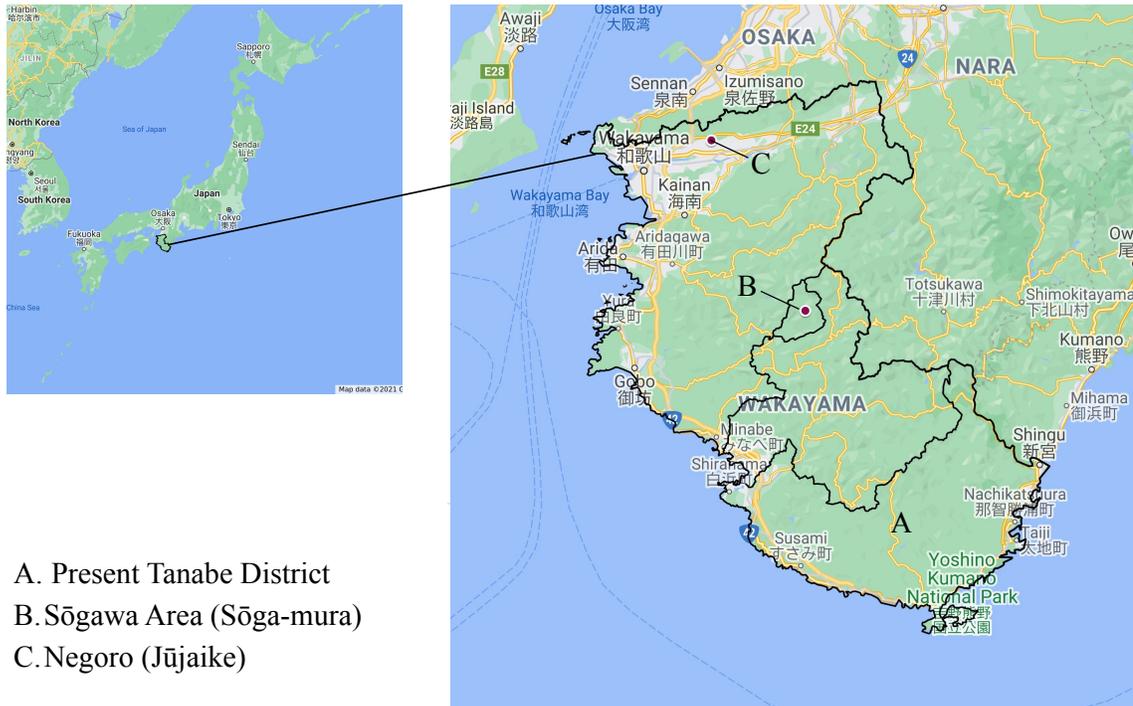
²⁰⁹ Takako Ōmori, “A Study of Traditional Games (6) Centering on Play Songs Without Gesture,” *Sugiyama Jogakundaigaku Kenkyū Ronshū* (Sugiyama Jogakuen University Research Review), no. 44 (2013): 1.

²¹⁰ Kishimoto, “Tracing the Development of Japanese Choral Tradition, and the Influence of Buddhism and Western Music,” 48.

²¹¹ *Ibid.*

of the folksong's origins. He ends this tune with an aleatoric section of whoops and hollers, free of pitch, before reverting to the opening motivic idea that recapitulates the first tune, "Sōga-mura no sonchō-san". Matsushita accentuates the playful nature of the text by converting the meter of the tunes, "Soga-mura no soncho" and "Bero-bero no Kamisama," to 7/8, instead of its typical duple setting, which further meshes the two disparate folksongs closer together within the single work.

"Kotoba-asobi Uta" was conceived in 2001 when Matsushita was commissioned by Haruhiko Numamaru (director of the Wakayama Children's Choir) to compose a set of children's songs. The Wakayama Children's choir is a prominent group, and have commissioned Matsushita for other works, including "Aizu Bandai-san." "Kotoba Asobi-uta" is part of the commissioned set, and the premier performance took place October 13, 2002, at Kurayoshi Mirai Chūshin Main Hall during the 17th National Cultural Festival in Tottori 2002/Yume Festa Tottori 2002 Chorus Festival.



- A. Present Tanabe District
- B. Sōgawa Area (Sōga-mura)
- C. Negoro (Jūjaike)

Figure 36: Map of Wakayama Prefecture²¹²

Analysis

The first *asobi-uta* in the piece is “Sōga-mura no Sonchō-san” (“The Mayor of Sōga Village”), which is a modified title of a tune better known in Japan as, “Sōda-mura no Sonchō-san” (“The Mayor of Soda Village), referring to soda, the sugary carbonated drink, a term borrowed from English.²¹³ “Sōda” is also a short saying in Japanese

²¹² “Map of Wakayama Prefecture,” Google Maps, accessed April 30, 2022, <https://www.google.com/maps/d/u/0/edit?mid=1jrUOMCTxoM-7nHm8LO6AUIdnZ5jiMeKE&usp=sharing>.

²¹³ In Japanese, it is quite common to have “borrowed” words from foreign languages, especially those from Europe and North America. These words are known as *gairaigo*.

meaning, “it was so” or “it seems that,” and is used in this *warabe-uta* to end each phrase of text. This type of *warabe-uta* is categorized as a *Jiguchi-uta* or a “pun song.”²¹⁴ The original word play of the song is specifically emphasizing the syllables of “so” and “da,” with the primary emphasis being on “so,” which starts each line of text in the song. “Da” takes on a secondary role, primarily used to simply end each phrase, meaning that when Matsushita decided to change the namesake of the village from “Soda-mura” to “Sōga-mura,” the word play was only minimally affected. Matsushita explains his reasoning for the text change:

“Soga-mura, was an actual place in Wakayama... It really existed. So this, “Soda-mura no sonchō-san,” the word “Soda” I didn’t find very interesting. However, Soga-mura was actually there, so “Soga-mura no Sonchō-san,” this word play is much more interesting.”²¹⁵

He explains how the likelihood of an actual Sōda-mura (Soda Village) in Japan existing is virtually non-existent, and how the lyrics became much more interesting and relatable by changing it to depict an actual place in the Tanabe district of Wakayama prefecture.²¹⁶

Matsushita uses an originally-composed eight-measure pentatonic melodic idea—which will be referred to as Motif 1—to connect the three chosen *asobi-uta* pieces. The motif begins “Kotoba Asobi-uta,” and is used as an introduction to the A section in both

²¹⁴ Takako Ōmori, “A Study of Traditional Games (6) Centering on Play Songs Without Gesture,” 5.

²¹⁵ Matsushita, interview by author.

²¹⁶ Ko Matsushita, *Ki-no Kuni-no Kodomo-uta* 3 (2003; repr., Tokyo: edition Kawai, 2019), 48; Matsushita may have been referring to the old borders of the Tanabe district as the Sōgawa area of Wakayama is in present day Hidaka district.

starting consonant, and the darker vowel of “on,” allows Motif 2 to take on the role of accompaniment, providing harmony and stressing the division of the meter.

The constant shifting and layering of voices creates three sonically distinct characters, especially if performing the piece in a section-based choral formation. The use of “call and response” in introducing Motif 1 adds to the sense of play, which is further emphasized by the dance-like 7/8 time signature, specifically broken up in the time signature as 2/4+3/8. Matsushita ends the introduction abruptly with an A \flat chord with a fourth suspension. This A \flat suspended chord functions as a transition from the Introduction to the next part of the piece. He resolves the suspension with the anacrusis that leads to the next section of the piece and the first *asobi-uta* tune used, “Sōgamura no Sonchō-san.”

Section A, “Sōgamura no Sonchō-san,” uses Motif 1, Motif 2, and the tune of “Soga-mura no Soncho-san” simultaneously. The melody of “Soga-mura no Soncho-san” is rather static, mostly centering around the pitch, A. The continuation of Motif 1 in Section A provides a more melodic countersubject in the first eight measures of Section A. Starting in measure 25, Matsushita begins to dissolve Motif 1’s importance as he instead harmonizes the melody in fifths in Parts I and II. Motif 2 remains prominent throughout, dropping out only at the close of Section A in measures 33–36. Measures 33–40 are basically a condensed repetition of the Introduction, and since Motifs 1 and 2 are so easily intertwined with the tune of “Soga-mura no Soncho-san,” its presence here creates a sense of closure to Section A.

The beginning of Section B, at measure 41, is marked by the introduction of the next *asobi-uta*, “Negoro no Jūjaike ni.” The meter shifts out of the dance-like 7/8 time signature, instead featuring common time signatures such as 4/4 and 3/4. In addition to the meter change, Parts III and IV use an A \flat suspended chord, much like the chord in measure 16 at end of the Introduction. Matsushita again uses this chord to transition between sections, although at measure 41, the suspension is at the sixth rather than the fourth as it is in measure 16. It can be argued that this chord is related to Motif 2, with its dominance of an open fifth in the lower voices. Matsushita continues to use open fifths in the lower voices until measure 47—about halfway through Section B. By using these aspects of Motif 2 in “Negoro no Jūjaike ni,” he connects his originally composed material in the introduction with this section.

The insertion of “Negoro no Jūjaike-ni,” a children’s song about the legendary giant snake that lives in Jūjaike pond in the Negoro area of the mountains, is particularly interesting in relation to Matsushita’s compositional motivations. While the folk tale of the snake is relatively well known in the area, the folk tune is much less so. A survey conducted in a 2020 study of folk tunes in early childhood education in Wakayama found that while 47.3% of participants in the study knew of the folk tale, only 15.4% of participants knew of the song.²¹⁷ This *warabe-uta* is very local to Wakayama prefecture,

²¹⁷ Morishita Junko, et al, “Research on Cooperation and Collaboration between the Training school for Nursery School Teachers and the Local Government: Through the Development of Teaching Materials for Nursery Schools, Kindergartens and Childcare Centers to Nurture Local Love,” *Wakayama Shin-ai Daigaku Kyōiku Gakubu Kiyō*, no. 1 (2020): 49–51, https://www.wsu.ac.jp/cms/wp_shinai/wp-content/uploads/6_2020Bulletin_paper_MORISHITAjother.pdf.

a point that Matsushita likes to emphasize in this arrangement.²¹⁸ The choice of this folksong in “Kotoba-asobi Uta” highlights one of Matsushita’s motivations for writing *minyō*-based choral works, which is to educate choristers and audiences on the unique and traditional sounds of Japanese folk and language.²¹⁹

The word play specifically focuses on the syllable “*ja*,” another term for “*hebi*” meaning “snake.”²²⁰ “*Ja*” also happens to be a copula in *Kishū-ben* and other dialects of the Kansai (aka. Seibu) region.²²¹ With all the clever word play with “*ja*,” the song creates emphasis on certain beats of the melody. In the opening line of text, “*negoro no jujaike ni daijaga irujato kikuja*” (“In Jujaike pond of Negoro there is a big snake I heard”), the stressed beats appear on each “*ja*.” Matsushita, in spirit of the word play at hand, inserts more “*ja*” syllables in Parts III and IV, which accompany the melody in measures 44–45.

²¹⁸ Matsushita, interview by author.

²¹⁹ Ko Matsushita, *Ki-no Kuni-no Kodomo-uta* 3, 2.

²²⁰ “Iwade-cho: Jūjaike Muroya no Katsurahime tonomatsuwari,” Wakayama no Minyō, Wakayama Furusato Archive, accessed April 16, 2021, <https://wave.pref.wakayama.lg.jp/bunka-archive/minwa/06.html>.

²²¹ Onishi, 565; In linguistics, a copula is a word or phrase that is used to connect the subject with its complement.

[住蛇池に／Jujaike-ni]

41 $\text{♩} = \text{ca. } 120$ *mp* *p*

I
ね ころ の じゅう じゃ い け に だ い じゃ が いる じゃ と き く じゃ が お じゃ
Ne-go-ro no Ju - ja - i - ke ni Da - i - ja ga I - ru - ja to Ki - ku - ja ga O - ja

II
ね ころ の じゅう じゃ い け に だ い じゃ が いる じゃ と き く じゃ が お じゃ か
Ne-go-ro no Ju - ja - i - ke ni Da - i - ja ga I - ru - ja to Ki - ku - ja ga O - ja ka

III
mp vocalise (a) *p*
じゃ じゃ
ja ja

IV
mp vocalise (a) *p*
(Half steps) じゃ じゃ
ja ja

45 *mf* *f*

か め じゃ か か じゃ か じゃ じゃ じゃ じゃ じゃ
ka Me - ja ka Ka - ja ka ja ja ja ja ja

め じゃ か な ん じゃ か か じゃ か じゃ じゃ じゃ じゃ じゃ
Me - ja ka Na - n - ja ka Ka - ja ka ja ja ja ja ja

じゃ じゃ じゃ じゃ じゃ じゃ わ か ら ん じゃ ね ころ の じゅう
ja ja ja ja ja wa - ka - ra - n ja Ne - go - ro no Ju -

じゃ じゃ じゃ じゃ じゃ じゃ わ か ら ん じゃ ね ころ の じゅう
ja ja ja ja ja wa - ka - ra - n ja Ne - go - ro no Ju -

Ko Matsushita KOTOBA-ASOBI UTA

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Figure 38: "Jujaike-ni" from "Kotoba-asobi Uta" with half steps outlined in red, mm 41–48.

Matsushita's writing can be interpreted as musically adhering to the story of the song, using open fifths in Part IV that move up and down by half steps (G and D to Ab

and Eb). Part III at this point is moving down and up by a whole step (G to F). Together with the ascending half step seen in Part IV, there is an emphasis placed on the Ab suspended transition chord seen earlier at measure 41 (Figure 38). The motion of slithering half steps in Part IV evokes imagery of a snake, while the crescendo across those two measures depicts the growing size of the pond's monster described in the folk tale. Matsushita elaborates on this musical idea in measures 46–47, ascending the “*ja*” syllables from the bottom two parts to the top two parts.

The ascending line smoothly trades off the melody to Parts III and IV while also allowing Matsushita to modulate up a step. What is interesting is how Matsushita ends this ascension. Parts I and II shift from an Ab major chord on beat 4 of measure 47 to moving up chromatically by a half step to an A major chord on the downbeat of measure 48, which is a continuation of half step movements found in measures 44–45. Landing on the A major chord makes it seem as if everything moved up by a half step, but this contradicts with how Matsushita modulates the melody: in measure 48, the melody is raised by a whole step from where it was before and moves in whole steps—a contrast to Parts I and II, where the melody moves by a half step. While this would imply a dissonance of some kind, since Matsushita began this section with a strong dissonance between Ab and G (measures 41–45), the downbeat of measure 48 creates a suddenly strong consonance of A. It is as if the melody was pulled into an A tonal center, mirroring the action the snake pulling people into the pond. Whether this was intentional by Matsushita or not, it creates a point of interest to the listener. In a section that has so far been defined as dissonant, the shift to a clear A major triad presents strong contrast.

Table 7: Symmetrical Form in Section B of "Kotoba-asobi Uta," mm 41–54.

Section B:	First Half			Second Half		
Measures:	41-43	43-45	46-47	48-50	51-53	54
Part I	Melody Unison	Melody in imitation	Melody - Ascending "ja" figure	A Major Triad – Submediant Chord Progression	A Major Triad – Submediant Chord Progression	Melody
Part II	Melody Unison	Melody in imitation	Melody - Ascending "ja" figure	A Major Triad - Submediant Chord Progression	A Major Triad - Submediant Chord Progression	Harmonization of Melody
Part III	A ^b suspension chord	A ^b suspension chord (Variation)	Ascending "ja" figure - Melody	Melody Unison	Melody in imitation	Harmonization of Melody
Part IV	A ^b suspension chord	A ^b suspension chord (Variation)	Ascending "ja" figure - Melody	Melody Unison	Melody in imitation	Harmonization of Melody

Section B is semi-symmetrical in structure, especially in terms of which parts sing the melody (see Table 7). In the first half, Parts I and II carry the melody, while Parts III and IV provide harmony and accompanying "ja" syllables. Measure 48 marks the halfway point and is where the melody shifts to Parts III and IV, and it is at this moment where the pivotal A major triad in Parts I and II occur. In the second half of Section B, Matsushita continues with the same "ja" syllables as an accompanying harmonic pattern, but rather than relying on open fifths and dissonances, he instead fills in the open fifths with thirds, creating a movement of step wise major triads: A major – G major – F major – G major – A major (Figure 39).

49

— ジャ ジャ ジャ — なんじゃ なん
— ja ja ja — Na - n - ja Na - n -

— ジャ ジャ ジャ — なんじゃ なん
— ja ja ja — Na - n - ja Na - n -

(bVI – bVII – I)

じゃいけにだいが いるじゃと きくじゃが おじゃか めじゃか
- ja - I - ke ni Da - i - ja ga I - ru - ja to Ki - ku - ja ga O - ja ka Me - ja ka

じゃいけにだいが いるじゃと きくじゃが おじゃか おじゃか めじゃか
- ja - I - ke ni Da - i - ja ga I - ru - ja to Ki - ku - ja ga O - ja ka O - ja ka Me - ja ka

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Figure 39: Submediant Chord Progression in "Negoro no Jūjaike ni", mm 50.

Functionally, this harmonic progression is constructed with the chromatic submediant (F major) moving to the subtonic (G major) which resolves to the tonic (A major.) This submediant chord progression of $bVI - bVII - I$ is seen in other pieces by Matsushita such as “Yukamuli Uta.” The resulting chord progression allows for each voice in Parts I and II to move in whole tones, which creates a tonal tug of war between minor and major keys, although it can seem that A is being most strongly tonicized in this moment.

As Section B ends, Matsushita lowers the tessitura of the upper voices back to the range that they start the section in, the harmony becomes less dense, and he ends the tune on a final “ja” syllable at open perfect intervals.

Measure 55 marks the introduction of Section C, “Bero-bero no Kamisama” (“God of the Bero-bero”), the final song used in “Kotoba Asobi-uta.” Matsushita again begins the new section in the piece with a form of a suspended $A\flat$ chord. At measure 55, the chord that transitions from “Negoro no Jūjaike ni” to “Bero-bero no Kamisama” is spelled from top to bottom as $A\flat$, $E\flat$, and $B\flat$. The presence of the $E\flat$ and the $A\flat$ relates to the open fifth in the transitional $A\flat$ suspension chord found back in measure 16, but the $B\flat$ included at measure 55 is a new suspension that he adds for the start of this section.

“Bero-bero no Kamisama” is a comical song that originates from Kōchi Prefecture, which neighbors Wakayama to the West. It is categorized as an *Uranai* song (fortune telling song) that refers to the god of *bero-bero* and is usually accompanied by a type of game which involves holding a stick with a bent tip and spinning it in the holder’s hands while singing the song.²²² The spinner would stop at the conclusion of the song, and whoever the stick was pointing to would have their fortune told. A variation of this is done as a parlor drinking game in Kochi Prefecture called *bekuhai*, however, instead of spinning a stick with one’s hands, a spinning top with flat sides, similar to a dreidel, is used to determine the players fortune on what type of drink to take.²²³ While the top is

²²² Ōmori, 5.

²²³ Local Topics Japan, “‘Bekuhai’, a unique play at a party in Kochi 高知のお座敷遊び「可杯（べくはい）」,” YouTube video, 1:54, February 2, 2017, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=khobVqbtRvQ>.

spinning, parlor musicians sing “Bero-bero no Kamisama” until it stops and lands on a face of the top.

Matsushita’s reasoning for choosing “Bero-bero no Kamisama” to be a part of this short medley is that he found the word “*bero-bero*” fun to sing.²²⁴ “*Bero-bero*” does not have a specific meaning in Japanese, but is a term used to describe a feeling of being spun around or dizziness, which makes “Bero-bero no Kamisama” also be affectionately known as the “God of the Drunks.”²²⁵ When asked about the insertion of “Bero-bero no Kamisama,” Matsushita does not necessarily associate the children’s song version with the more adult drinking version, but he does portray a sense of growing chaos and uneasiness in his arrangement of it.

One of the main characteristics of Matsushita’s version of “Bero-bero no Kamisama” is its use of rhythm. Matsushita shifts the tune back to an irregular meter, 7/8-time signature and uses a rhythmic ostinato pattern in Parts III and IV throughout the majority of the section. The prominent harmonic aspect of this ostinato pattern is the use of perfect fourths, primarily B \flat and E \flat , which creates dissonance when the melody enters on an A \flat pitch in measure 59. All the tones, however, are within the same pentatonic scale (E \flat , G \flat , A \flat , B \flat , D \flat), making the dissonance here less stark than in Section B.

²²⁴ Matsushita, interview by author.

²²⁵ “Tosa no Okyaku,” Visit Kochi Japan, accessed January 21, 2022, <https://visitkochijapan.com/en/see-and-do/10458>.

In Section C, Matsushita decides to layer voices. Measures 55–58 are solely Parts III and IV singing the rhythmic ostinato pattern. The pitches in these measures do not move, remaining as Bb and Eb. In measure 59, Matsushita adds the melody in Part II and varies the pitches of the rhythmic ostinato pattern to accompany the melody in measures 63–66. Measures 67–74 then serve as a repetition of measures 59–66, although Matsushita does add Part I to join Part II on the melody.

75 *mf* *misterioso* しかし滑稽に
 べろろ べろ べろ べろ
 be - ro - ro be - ro be - ro be - ro - ro - - -

mp
 べろ
 be be - ro be - ro - ro be - ro be - ro be - ro - ro be be - ro be - ro - ro be - ro be - ro be - ro - ro

mp
 べろ
 be be - ro be - ro - ro be - ro be - ro be - ro - ro be be - ro be - ro - ro be - ro be - ro be - ro - ro

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Figure 40: *Misterioso* Part I line in "Bero-bero no Kamisama", mm 75–78.

Measure 75 is where Matsushita starts to create uneasiness with a dizzying and non-metrical descending chromatic line in Part I (Figure 40). The expressive marking he designates for this moment is *misterioso*. Part I continues with its degeneration until

measure 86, Part II carries on the melody, while Parts III and IV continue with the ostinato.

Measure 87 then marks a clear shift in his setting of "*Bero-bero no Kamisama.*" First, the key has been raised by a whole step, increasing the sense of tension. In addition, Matsushita harmonizes the melody in open perfect fifths, while the ostinato pattern is broken up and only sounding on the anacrusis and the downbeat of each measure. This creates an interesting shift of syllables every other measure from "*be-ro-be*" to "*ro-be-ro.*" Part III begins to interject pitchless "*bero*" figures in measure 92, which quickly expand into a series of aleatoric patterns that Matsushita instructs to be sung at a free pitch and free dynamic. Matsushita continues to layer in more aleatoric patterns, first in Part IV in measure 98 and then Part II in measure 100 (Figure 41). During this time, the melody and its harmony at the fifth are maintained in Part I. Eventually, even Part I gives way to randomly singing musical patterns, and utter chaos ensues as every singer in the choir is singing a pattern entirely at their own melodic and rhythmic discretion.

99

べろべろの かみさまは しょうじきな かみさまじゃ
 Be-ro-be-ro no Ka-mi-sa-ma wa Sho-ji-ki-na Ka-mi-sa-ma ja

音高は自由。103小節に入るまでは強弱も自由。A pitch is free. dynamics is free until 103-bar.

① べろべろ be-ro be-ro
 ② べろべろ be-ro be-ro
 ③ べろろべ be-ro ro-be
 ④ べろろ be-ro ro

②~④のパターンを各自任意に選び、繰り返す。間をあけてもよい。Choose one of the patterns ② to ④ and repeat it along. You may pause while repeating.

⑤⑥⑦は音高も自由。⑧⑨はだんだん高音になっていってもよい。103小節に入るまでは強弱自由。
 ⑤⑥⑦ is free pitch. You may high pitch gradually in ⑧⑨. Dynamics is free until 103 bar.

⑧ べろ be-ro
 ⑨ べろべろべ be-ro-be-ro-be
 ⑩ べろ.....(巻き舌) be-ro.....
 ⑪ (port.) べろべ be-ro be
 ⑫ (port.) べろろ be-ro ro

③⑤は音高自由。③⑤ is free pitch.

103

cresc. -

⑬ べろべろ be-ro be-ro
 ⑭ べろべろべ be-ro be-ro be
 ⑮ べろべろ be-ro be-ro
 ⑯ べろ be-ro

⑬~⑯のパターンを各自任意に選び、繰り返す。間をあけてもよい。Choose one of the patterns ⑬ to ⑯ and repeat it along. You may pause while repeating.

cresc. -

⑰ べろ be-ro
 ⑱ べろ be-ro

⑰~⑱のパターンを各自任意に選び、繰り返す。間をあけてもよい。Choose one of the patterns ⑰ to ⑱ and repeat it along. You may pause while repeating.

cresc. -

⑲ べろ be-ro
 ⑳ べろ be-ro

⑲~㉑のパターンを各自任意に選び、繰り返す。間をあけてもよい。Choose one of the patterns ⑲ to ㉑ and repeat it along. You may pause while repeating.

ca. 20 sec.

fff

lunga

lunga

lunga

lunga

port.

べろ be-ro

ca. 5 sec.

ca. 132

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Figure 41: Layered aleatoricism in "Bero-bero no Kamisama," mm 99–104.

The method in which Matsushita employs this sense of chaos is particularly fitting to the character of “Bero-bero no Kamisama,” which embodies elements of fortune telling, playfulness, and dizziness. There is uncertainty in the song as to what the fortune or outcome will be, there is a silliness to the words, and there is growing excitement as the uncertainty builds towards the end of the song. A helpful interpretation of measures 87–104 is to view the section as an aural image of the rolling of the dice or shaking of a Magic Eight Ball. The random patterns end with a unison portamento spanning the entire vocal range of the choir through a vocal sigh on the word “*be-ro*,” which the author interprets as the fortune being told. This signals that order restored, which is confirmed at measure 106 with the recapitulation of the Introduction and Section A. The chaotic randomness, while all original to Matsushita, demonstrates his ability to use the character of a folk song as an inspirational source for creating new musical content that preserves its original intention.

“Kotoba Asobi Uta”, like other *minyō*-based compositions by Matsushita, is a demonstration of original musical ideas being fused with material from existing folk melodies, which despite adaptation and implementation of original content still retain the “body feeling” of folk origins. The presence of the original motif, written in a similar style to existing *warabe uta*, bridges the three songs used in “Kotoba Asobi Uta” into one unified piece. In addition to original musical ideas, Matsushita also takes artistic liberties with the existing folk material, such as the lyrical changes made to “Sōga-mura no Sonchō-san” and the adoption of 7/8 meter to “Sōga-mura no Sonchō-san” and “Bero Bero no Kamisama.” All three folk songs pertain to an element of play, a characteristic

that Matsushita engrains into the essence of his ideas and arrangements. “Kotoba Asobi Uta” shows Matsushita finding congruency between his personal musical characteristics and elements within Japanese folk traditions.

Conducting and Rehearsal Considerations

As a playful composition, “Kotoba Asobi Uta” provides many fun challenges to both the conductor and the choir. While Wakayama Children’s Choir, for whom the work was commissioned, is a youth ensemble, it is at an advanced level its age group by American standards. Thus, the piece would work well with high school and collegiate advanced level treble groups.

Since the piece is composed of three *warabe uta*, it would be helpful for ensembles to first learn what each of the *warabe uta* tunes are before attempting to rehearse everything together. This can be done by first having the ensemble sing the Part III line from measures 17–24 for “Sōga-mura no Sonchō-san,” the Soprano 2 line in measures 41–46 for “Negoro no Jūjaike ni,” and Soprano 2 line in measures 59–66 for “Bero-bero no Kamisama.” Establishing each individual tune to build familiarity with the ensemble will help with learning the piece as a whole.

Matsushita’s original motif is intuitively composed, and since it is repeated throughout, singers tend to learn it quickly. The 7/8 time signature, which Matsushita marks as 2/4+3/8, can be challenging at first to the Alto 2 singers, since their eighth note pulses occur on the macrobeats of a three-patterned 7/8. The onset of the downbeat after a three-eighth-note grouping does present some difficulty but can be countered by having

the Alto 2 singers mirror the conducting pattern themselves, enabling them to feel exactly how the meter is divided consistently throughout.

Due to its form, rehearsing “Kotoba Asobi Uta” in sections is very easy and likely the most practical approach to learning the piece. The ensemble can learn how each tune is set by Matsushita first, followed by working on the transitions, which can be challenging—notably measures 16–17, 40–41, and 105. The first two transitions mentioned involve a sustained A^b chord in the lower voices that can be difficult to accurately place due to the A^{\sharp} pitches preceding them, and repetition of practice is key to establishing accuracy. In measures 40–41, there is an added rhythmic challenge as Matsushita transitions from 7/8 to 4/4 while slightly slowing down the tempo. It is important for the conductor to maintain an inner sense of an eighth note pulse in order to provide a clear gesture for the choir that indicates the new meter and tempo. The final mentioned transition, measure 105, occurs at the recapitulation. After an aleatoric section that ends in an ascending then descending *portamento*, the Soprano 1 singers are required to enter back on an A. The discombobulation that occurs prior to this moment can make it hard to find that pitch accurately. If your choir is blessed with a singer with perfect pitch, this is their moment to shine. It may be necessary to shift a singer with perfect pitch up to Soprano 1 for that one measure to help re-establish the key. Another approach to solidifying this entrance is through repetition. Additionally, thorough rehearsal of the introduction with focus on the motif can establish pitch memory in the ensemble, allowing them to associate the motif with the correct A pitch.

The aleatoric section in “Bero bero no Kamisama” should also be carefully instructed. Matsushita provides instructions on how to perform each of the repeated fragments, of which there are a total of nineteenth. For a smaller ensemble, a consideration may be for singers to select two fragments that they will perform. Moreover, during the growing chaos of this section, there is a wonderful opportunity for singers to directly interact with each other. This provides a more interesting and dramatic visual effect that would be missed if the singers just looked at the conductor the entire time. Choirs and conductors can be creative with their interpretation and may even consider some light staging or choreography for this section. In my lecture recital, the singers looked and engaged with each other to create a lighthearted and playful atmosphere. The preparatory gesture for the final *portamento* was the cue for singers to face the front again.

One of the most challenging phrases in the piece comes at measures 75–82 in the Soprano 1 line (Figure 40). This phrase is both rhythmically and tonally challenging and can be difficult for an entire section to sing accurately together if rehearsal time is limited. This is another opportunity where a director may choose to isolate that phrase as a solo if the ensemble is small enough where the balance will not be affected.

Above all, the playful character of “Kotoba Asobi Uta” must be embodied by the ensemble. This is not a static piece and should be performed with energetic breath and motion to achieve the appropriate spirit of the work.

Pronunciation and Translation

“Kotoba-asobi Uta”

寒川村の村長さん

The Mayor of Sōga Village

寒川村の村長さんが
Sōgamura no sonchōsan ga
[so:ga muura no sontʃo:san ga]

The Mayor of Soga Village

ソーダ飲んで死んだそうだ。
Sōda nonde shinda sōda
[so:da nonde ʃinda so:da]

Drank some soda and has seemed to die.

葬式まんじゅう うまかったそうだ
Shōshiki manjū umakatta sōda
[ʃo:ʃiki mandzɯ: umakat:ta so:da]

The funeral *manjū* (type of Japanese sweet bun) were delicious.

住蛇池に

At Jūjaike (Jūja Pond)

根来の住蛇池に
Negoro no Jūjaike ni
[negoro no dzɯ:dʒa ike ni]

At Negoro's Jūjaike

大蛇がいるじゃと聞くじゃが
Daija ga iru ja to kikuja ga
[daidʒa ga iru dʒa to kikuɔʒaga]

I've heard there is a large snake.

雄蛇が雌蛇かなんじゃかかじゃか
Oja ga meja ka nanjaka kajaka
[odʒa ga meɔʒa ga nandʒaka kadʒaka]

Is it a boy snake, a girl snake?

わからんじゃ
Wakaranja
[wakarandʒa]

I do not know!

べろべろの神様

The Kami (God) of Bero Bero

べろべろの神様は
Bero bero no kamisama wa
[bero bero no kamisama wa]

The God of *Bero Bero* is

正直な神様じゃ
Shōjikina kamisama ja
[ʃoodʒikina kamisama dʒa]

An honest god.

お笹の方へおもむける
Osasa no hō e omomukeru
[osasa no ho: ε omomukeru]

Point towards the *Osasa* (stick with bent tip.)

おもむける
Omomukeru
[omomukeru]

Point towards.

“Yukamuli Uta”

Background

“Yukamuli Uta” (alternative spelling “Yukamuri Uta”) was commissioned by the University of Tottori Philchor for their 50th anniversary annual concert on December 12, 2009.²²⁶ The work is the final piece in a set of three choral arrangements of folk songs from Tottori prefecture and was later published as *Nihon no Minyō Dai 7 Shū*. The other two pieces included in the set are “Kaigara-bushi” (“Song of the Shellfish Gatherer”) and “Tae-uta” (“Rice Planting Song”). This publication is similar to *Ki no Kuni no*

²²⁶ Ko Matsushita, *Nihon no Minyō Dai 7 Shū*, (2011; repr., Tokyo: edition Kawai, 2018), 3.

Kodomouta 3 and *Nihon no Minyō Dai 3 Shū* in that the pieces were originally conceived to be performed as part of the same concert. This differs from his earlier publication of *Nihon no Minyō Dai 2 Shū*, which is a collection of Japanese folk music-based compositions that were compiled together.

Matsushita expresses in the preface of *Nihon no Minyō Dai 7 Shū* that he “chose melodies from three folksongs that are related to fishery, farming, and hot spring, which clearly describe the rich climate of Tottori prefecture.”²²⁷ He also mentioned in an interview that he found the folk tune of “Yukamuri Uta” to be highly interesting for its unique origins and rhythmic properties.²²⁸ “The tune comes from the Iwai Onsen (Iwai Hot Springs) in Iwami-cho, one of the oldest hot springs resorts in Japan and possibly the oldest hot spring resort in the Sanin region, being opened around the year 860.”²²⁹

Hot Springs (*onsen*) in Japan are a culturally significant part of its history and remains popular in the present day. *Onsen* is more than simply bathing in a hot spring; in early Japan they were often recognized as sacred places, and to this day there are many

²²⁷ Ibid.

²²⁸ For the purposes of this analysis, the alternative spelling of “Yukamuri Uta” will be used to refer to the original folksong as it is congruent with how Japanese words and titles are transliterated within this document. When referring to Matsushita’s arrangement of the folksong, the spelling, “Yukamuli Uta” will be used to match the publication’s transliteration.

²²⁹ “Iwai Gaiyō (Iwai Overview),” *Nihon Onsen Kyōkai* (Japan Spa Association), <https://www.spa.or.jp/kokumin/1063/>.

legends surrounding the spiritual and healing properties of *onsen*.²³⁰ During the Edo period, the *onsen* was often regarded as a medical facility where people would go to treat their illnesses and ailments.²³¹ It was believed that visiting the *onsen* and soaking in the water of the hot springs held many health benefits. There is merit to this, as now visiting *onsen* is recognized as possessing benefits “such as disease prevention, health promotion, rehabilitation, and treatment of chronic diseases” as well as providing “community bath and recreational elements.”²³²

Iwai Onsen possesses legendary stories of healing as well. The origin myth involves a member of the Fujiwara clan, named Fujiwara no Fuyuhisa,²³³ who suffered from a severe skin disease being cured of his ailment through the healing properties of the hot springs there.²³⁴ The song is said to provide an uplifting mood to the guests of Iwai Onsen and has also become a *bonodori*, performed during *Obon* festivities and

²³⁰ Mihaela Serbulea, Unnikrishnan Payyappallimana. “*Onsen* (hot springs) in Japan - Transforming terrain into healing landscapes,” *Health and Place* 18, no. 6 (November 2012): 1371, www.elsevier.com/locate/healthplace, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.healthplace.2012.06.020>.

²³¹ Asano, 523.

²³² Serbulea and Payyappallimana, 1367.

²³³ The Fujiwara clan was one of the most powerful ruling families in Japan during the 5th-12th centuries. They are part of many legends and mythologically based pieces of art and literature including the *Tale of Genji*.

²³⁴ “Dai 5 Fudasho Iōzen Tōgenji”, Inabayakushireijyōkai, accessed December 19, 2020, <http://www.inabapyonpyon.net/~housen/fada5.html>.

matsuri festivals in Tottori prefecture. It originated in the middle of the Edo period and remained a popularly sung *minyō* at the resort through the Meiji period.²³⁵

It is a type of counting song with the last phrase of each verse being repeated as the first phrase of the following verse. Patrons of the hot spring, or *onsen*, would be given a hand towel that they would place on their heads and a wooden ladle with a short handle that would be used to splash the hot water onto themselves to wash their bodies.²³⁶ The water at Iwai Onsen is fairly hot, ranging from 44–46 degrees Celsius, so the splashing was done to cool the hot spring water slightly.²³⁷ A unique rhythmic pattern emerged as patrons would repeat this motion of paddling the water with the wooden ladle, and this is what is thought to have become the metric basis of the folk song.²³⁸ Guests would visit the resort and sing this rhythmic song while bathing in the *onsen*.

In the early days of the existence of “Yukamuri Uta”, the tune was most likely sung without a standardized set of lyrics. Eventually, the folk song adopted *Chūshingura* based lyrics,²³⁹ which refers to any literature or art that is affiliated with the fictionalized accounts of the Akō vendetta—the true events surrounding the 47 *ronin* and their quest to avenge their slain master, Asano Naganori in. Countless theatrical pieces were produced based on the incident, with one of the most prominent being the massively popular

²³⁵ Asano, *Nihon Minyō Daijiten*, 523.

²³⁶ *Ibid*, 523.

²³⁷ Matsushita, interview by author.

²³⁸ Asano, 523.

²³⁹ *Ibid*.

Bunraku play, *Kanadehon-Chūshingura*, which took Japan by storm in the middle of the eighteenth century.²⁴⁰ Within the lyrics of “Yukamuri Uta,” there are many references to characters and plot points in the story of the *47 Ronin*. In addition to *Chūshingura*, other popular eighteenth century Japanese literature and drama are referenced in the lyrics, notably the *rakugo* spoken story titled, *Arasuji*, and the *bunraku* puppet play, *Yaegaki-hime*.

One of the unique characteristics about the folk song is its consistent dotted rhythmic pattern. In Matsushita’s arrangement, this rhythmic pattern is seen as a dotted eighth note followed by a sixteenth note; however, since Japanese folksongs were not composed with Western notation in mind, it is more helpful to think of the dotted figure as an uneven division of the beat, with the longer subdivision preceding the shorter subdivision. Hughes notes that this type of division of the beat is often described with the Japanese verb, *hazumu*, which is best translated as “swing.”²⁴¹ This type of rhythmic figure, along with syncopated rhythms, are typical of seafaring folk songs and are associated with activities such as fishing, shellfish gathering, seaweed gathering, and boating. Matsushita classifies these types of songs under the term *Kaiyōminteki*, meaning “sea people’s style.”²⁴² Well known examples of such songs include: “Sado Okesa” from

²⁴⁰ Takeda Izumo, Miyoshi Shoraku, and Namiki Senryu, *Chūshingura, or the Treasury of Loyal Retainers*, trans. by Jukichi Inouye, 3rd edition, (Tokyo: Nakanishi-ya, 1917) xxi–xxiii.

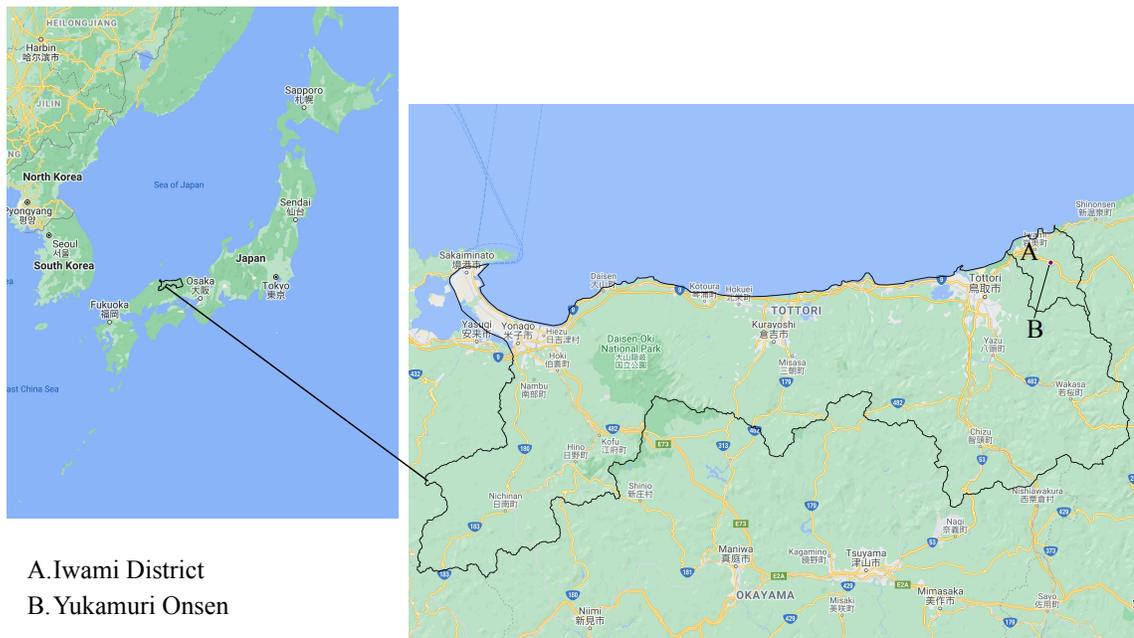
²⁴¹ Hughes, 26.

²⁴² Matsushita, interview by author.

Sado Island, “Kaigara Bushi” from Tottori Prefecture, and “Asadoya Yunta” from Okinawa. The Iwai hot springs are located roughly 6 kilometers inland from the nearest coast and is nestled in a valley surrounded by forested and mountainous hills.

Geographically, songs in this sort of terrain would typically be in a free meter Oiwake style associated with the countryside,²⁴³ but Matsushita points out seafaring songs and “Yukamuri Uta” share a commonality, which is water, and he attributes this as the reasoning for the seafaring rhythms found in “Yukamuri Uta.” It is an interesting and rare musical situation.

²⁴³ Matsushita, interview by author.



A. Iwami District
B. Yukamuri Onsen

Figure 42: Map of Tottori Prefecture²⁴⁴

Analysis

In Matsushita’s arrangement of “Yukamuli Uta”, the recurring dotted rhythmic pattern is placed as the foundation for the entire piece. In contrast with some of Matsushita’s other folk song arrangements, “Yukamuli Uta” never changes meter, nor does it go into a more rhythmically free section. For example, in his arrangement of “Tsugaru Jongara-bushi”, another folk song dominated by rhythm, he eliminates the driving pulse in the second verse with sustained with long sustained notes in the accompanying vocal parts. The slower tempo and drop in dynamics also provide a stark

²⁴⁴ “Map of Tottori Prefecture,” Google Maps, accessed April 30, 2022, https://www.google.com/maps/d/u/0/edit?mid=1RtPZ8kqoM9tnBnOuWVx6I_Q1mfqid23_&usp=sharing.

contrast between the verses in “Tsugaru Jongara-bushi”. There is a verse in “Yukamuli Uta” where he slows the tempo, which can be viewed as providing a slight contrast, but the dotted rhythmic pattern remains constant throughout the entirety of the piece. The consistency of the dotted rhythmic pattern may be attributed to the fact that the folksong is now performed a *bonodori* dance, but even in other arrangements of *bonodori* folksongs, Matsushita will still vary the rhythm and/or meter. This is evident in his arrangements of “Mihara Yassa bushi” and “Kaigara-bushi,” both of which also use the seafaring dotted rhythmic pattern. The dotted rhythmic pattern in “Yukamuli Uta” is used throughout without pause. Matsushita, when interviewed, stressed the importance and uniqueness of a seafaring dotted rhythm being used in an inland song.²⁴⁵ By having the dotted rhythmic pattern never stop or drastically change, he keeps one of the main characteristics of the folk song intact.

Matsushita keeps the original tune in the *ritsu* scale, with the pitches: G-A-C-D-E-G. It is a major pentatonic scale that is characterized by its use of major second intervals after the tonic and the fifth scale degrees. “Yukamuli Uta” could be considered to be in a *yonanuki* scale, by treating C as the tonic; however, as noted in Chapter 4, the *yonanuki* scale—while related to the *ritsu* scale—did not become commonplace in Japanese folk-based music until the Meiji Era.²⁴⁶ Since the origins of “Yukamuli Uta”, predate that, it is more accurate to consider the melody based in the *ritsu* scale.

²⁴⁵ Matsushita, interview by author.

²⁴⁶ See Chapter 4, Scales.

Matsushita also retains the structural elements found in the folk song. “Yukamuli Uta,” like many other Japanese traditional folk songs, has many sets of verses, and it is common practice to just perform a few that are more familiar to the performer. Regardless of the number of verses, each typically uses the same form and syllabic structures, and in “Yukamuli Uta,” each verse is comprised of three phrases followed by a refrain (see Table 8).

Table 8: Phrase structure of “Yukamuli Uta.”

Phrase 1	Phrase 2	Phrase 3	Phrase 4
Preparatory statement: “ <i>yare yare yare</i> ”	Verse		Refrain: “ <i>mitsu ni yottsui...</i> ”

The first phrase is a preparatory statement of “*yare yare yare yare*,” the sung nonsensical vocables. Vocables such as these are common in Japanese folk music, often being sung as a response to whoever is leading the folk song, and are referred to as *hayashi kotoba*, meaning “encouragement words.”²⁴⁷ Matsushita uses this preparatory phrase as an opportunity for motivic development and transitionary devices. The next two phrases contain the actual lyrics of the verse that tell the story of the folk song. The refrain of “Yukamuli Uta” is a play on counting in Japanese. The phrase, “*mitsu ni yottsui wa itsudemo muttsu, nanna yatsunara*,” translates to, “three to the four is the five and the six, seven if an eight then.” After the counting, each refrain closes by singing the opening

²⁴⁷ Hughes, 30.

words of the next verse coming up. For the most part, Matsushita adheres to this pattern, the only exception being a modification of the preparatory section between verses four and five, where there is a substitution of text from “*yare yare*” to “*mada mada*,” meaning, “keep going.” Although he varies each phrase, the phrases that make up the verses are still in clear sections and heard as recognizable to the original tune.

Musically, Matsushita opens the piece with a focus on two elements: the pitch, G, and the dotted seafaring rhythm on the folksong’s *hayashi kotoba* of “*yare yare*” (Figure 43). Together, they lay out the arrangement’s main motif, exhibiting the dotted *Kaiyōminteki* rhythm and setting the tonic for the start of the piece.



Figure 43: Main Rhythmic Motif of “Yukamuli Uta”

The G pitch used as the tonic is an alteration that Matsushita makes to the original melody. In other recordings of the folk song, the opening “*yare yare yare yare*” begins on the fourth scale degree, or if we are observing analyzing the melody through the *ritsu* scale, the third note. In the case of Matsushita’s arrangement, the opening pitch would be expected to be a C, but he instead emphasizes the G. He does compose an ascending and descending scalar idea that peaks at C, which could be seen as a variation of the traditional opening of the folk song’s verses.

Matsushita condenses the imitation by having the tenors enter again in the middle of the sopranos' second statement of the scalar idea. The tenors' statement of the scalar idea is then imitated by the altos at the same point. Altogether, the Introduction demonstrates Matsushita's intention to add layers of complexity and interest as the piece progresses.

This progression mirrors how he treats each verse compositionally. Verse 1 largely remains in the same simple call and response style that the Introduction ended with. Verse 2 adds a harmonization of a fifth to the melody, as well as non-diatonic tones in the accompanying voices. Verse 3 becomes more developmental and harmonically complex, as Matsushita makes use of Tritones in the accompanying voices and alters the melody with chromaticism to ultimately modulate up a whole step to A. Verse 4 is more centered tonally but much more complex in its texture, featuring polyphonic and antiphonal writing. Sections of the verse are also extended. Following Verse 4, the refrain is omitted, and instead goes straight into Verse 5, where Matsushita adds in a new element—body percussion—that is passed around the choir as the piece is performed. The tempo is also quickened, intensifying the inertia created by the antiphonal style and the body percussion, which drives the piece to a close on an A major chord marked, *tutta forza*. Throughout the harmonic development of the piece, the choir functions in a quasi-double-choir style, with the Sopranos and Altos acting as the first choir that leads and the Tenors and Basses as a second choir that follows.

Highlighted in Verse 3 but present throughout, Matsushita's use of tritones is an important harmonic feature of the piece. His use of tritones first appears in the interlude following Verse 1, where he composes a four-measure stacking figure in which the

pitches G-C-C#-F# are layered on top of each other one-by-one in each part (Figure 46). A simpler way to view this figure is to see it as a stacking of two tritones: G-C# and C-F#. The four-measure stacking figure resolves neatly into perfect intervals between G and C spanning two octaves from Bass to Soprano. The F# resolves in an upward motion, which acts as a leading tone and reinforces the G functioning as the tonic. Tritones make small appearances in Verse 2 in the accompanying vocal parts sung by the tenors and the basses, with C-F# tritone occurring twice in the middle of the verse and C#-G tritone occurring at the end of the verse. Up until this point, most of the harmonies and intervals are diatonic or scalar. As such, these tritones seem stark at first, but they are merely a foreshadowing of what Matsushita will do later in the piece.

The image shows a musical score for four parts (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) of the piece "Yukamuli Uta". The score consists of four staves. The lyrics "ya re ya re" are written below the notes. The music features a four-measure stacking figure of tritones (G-C-C#-F#) that resolves into perfect intervals. Dynamic markings include *mf*, *f*, *mp*, *p*, and *pp*. The score is in a key with one sharp (F#) and a common time signature.

Ko Matsushita YUKAMULI-UTA
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Figure 46: Stacking Tritones in “Yukamuli Uta,” mm 61–65

The tritones are most prominent in Verse 3, the most chromatic section, and are used to modulate the piece up a whole step. Tritones are used as transitional devices as the verse journeys into tonal uncertainty and ultimately toward landing on A as the new tonal center. The accompanying voices, sopranos and altos, are at constant tritone intervals and move harmonically in a descending motion from measures 107–124, followed by an ascending motion from measures 125–132 (also marking the refrain of Verse 3). The succession of tritones in the accompanying voices of Verse 3 can be seen in Table 9.

Table 9: Sequence of Tritones in Verse 3, mm 107–132

Measures:	107-114	115-118	119-120	121-124	125-128	129-130	131
Tritone:	C#/G	C/F#	E/Bb	Eb/A	F/B	F#/C	G/C#—A/D#—Bb/E

The presence of these tritones sounded through the rhythmic motif, are used as a harmonic tool to modulate the piece from G to A. The prevalence of the tritone throughout this verse points to Matsushita’s affinity towards innovative harmonic gestures through tritone relationships that can be seen as reminiscent of Bartók. Matsushita has stated numerous times that Bartók is a major influence on his development as a composer, something that he picked up during his time in studying at the Kodaly Institute in Hungary. He saw how Bartók was able to take the pentatonic folk tunes of Hungary and harmonize them in his works. Seeing how Japanese folk music is also largely pentatonic, Matsushita was inspired to use some of Bartók’s methods and

apply them in his own compositions, specifically using the Axis System and Fibonacci progression.²⁴⁸

Looking at the above progression of tritones through the lens of the Axis System, a circular pattern emerges, albeit with substitutions. This method of analysis was also used in charting the harmonic sequence of the C section in “Aizu Bandaisan”, the first analysis in Chapter Four, where the principles of Axis Theory are explained in greater detail. To summarize the main points as they pertain to this piece, there are three axes that will be important to analyzing these tritones: the Tonic Axis, the Subdominant Axis, and the Dominant Axis. These axes are represented by colors in the chart below with green as Tonic, red as Subdominant, and Blue as Dominant (Figure 47). “Yukamuli Uta” has been in G up until Verse 3, therefore, G is the top of the circle and part of the tonic axis.

²⁴⁸ Matsushita, “Distinction of Japanese Native Sound Formation and Attempt of Fusing with Choral Music,” 189–193.

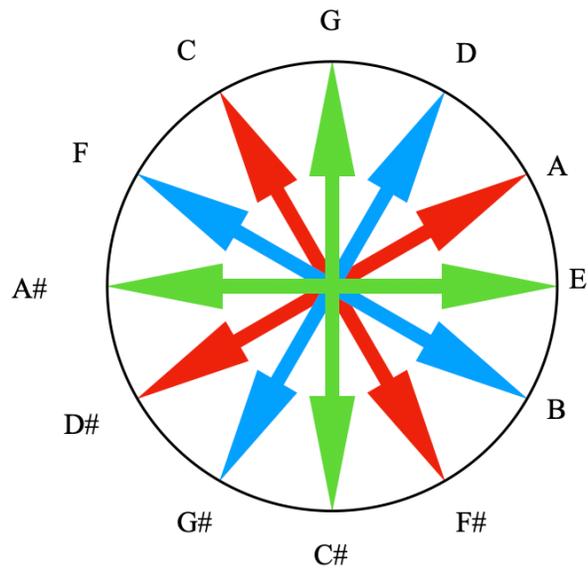


Figure 47: Tritone Axes with G as Tonic

Using the above graph as a guide, the progression of Tritones in the accompanying voices in Verse 3 can be visualized more clearly with Tonic, Subdominant, and Dominant functions in mind.

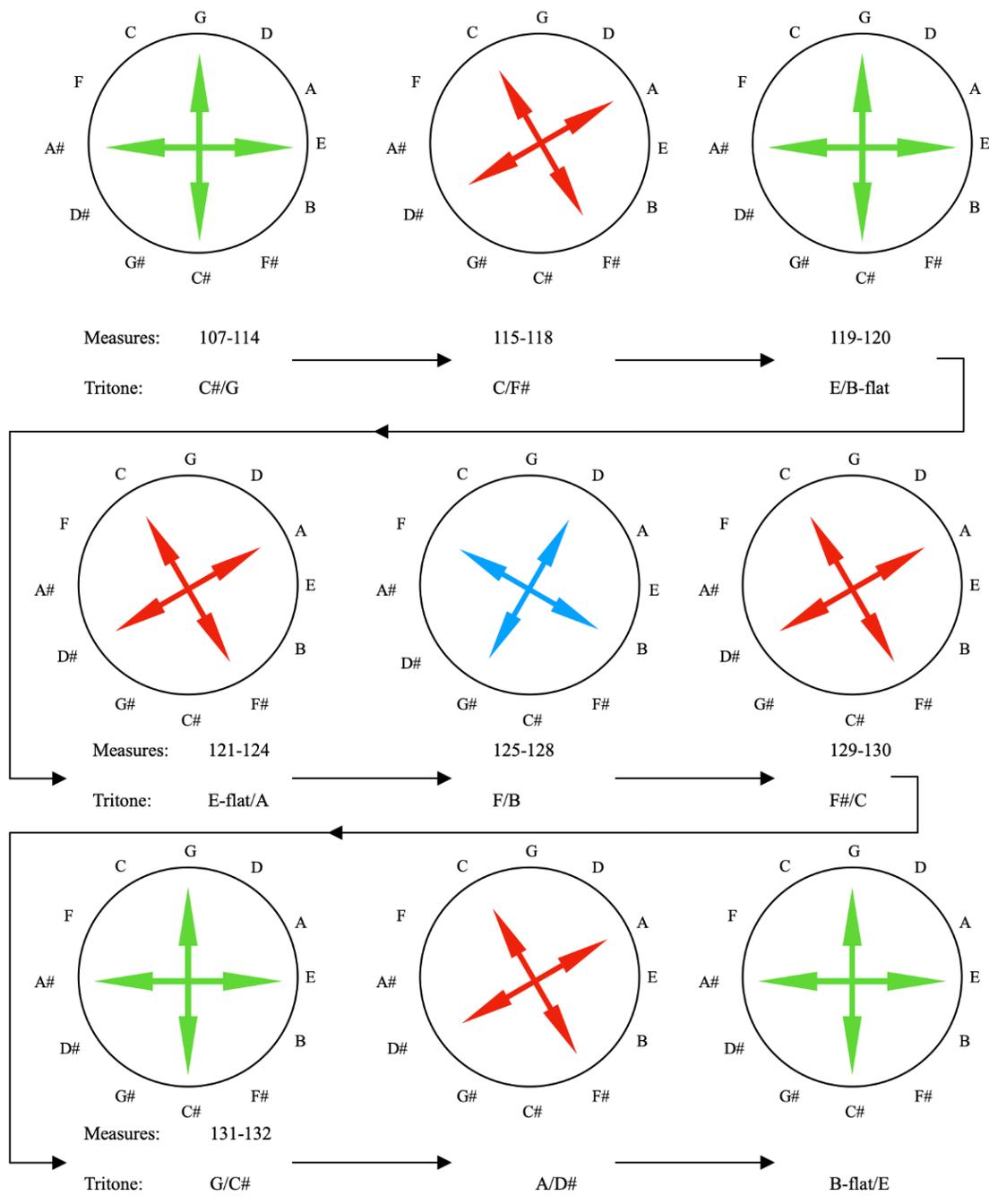


Figure 48: Movement of Tritone Axes in Verse 3 of “Yukamuli Uta”, mm 107–132.

Figure 48 is a representation of the movement of tritones in the soprano and alto voices during Verse 3 from measures 107–132. Based on axis shifts alone, there appears to be a symmetrical shape to the placement of tritones, going from Tonic–Subdominant–Tonic–Subdominant–Dominant–Subdominant–Tonic–Subdominant–Tonic. The Dominant Axis is the center of the structure.

In addition to the prevalence of tritones in the accompanying voices, Verse 3 also features extensive chromatic alterations to the melody of the piece. The modulations and alterations to the melody occur phrase by phrase.

Whether intentional or not, there is an interesting relationship between the dissonant harmonies and the text in Verse 3. The first two stanzas of Verse 3 translate as, “For a girl of twenty years old, the real world is the bubble of a dream. When she is asleep it is paradise, but when she is awake it changes to hell.”²⁴⁹ The appearance of tritones and increase dissonance mirrors the idea of the girl in the story, whose idealistic perspective being corrupted by terrible realities of the world she lives in. The next stanza in the verse discusses the “crying crow at the break of dawn.”²⁵⁰ At this moment, Matsushita begins an ascension in the tritones and in melodic alterations, as if the dawning of a new day is being portrayed by the rising of the key. The descension and ascension of tritones in Verse 3 and dissonant harmonies in the tenors and basses can be interpreted as evidence of Matsushita’s text painting.

²⁴⁹ Matsushita, *Nihon no Min'yō Dai 7 Shū*, 38.

²⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

The harmonically dense Verse 3 is in line with Matsushita's frequent treatment of middle sections as an opportunity for creating contrast. Furthermore, there are distinct similarities between Verse 3 of "Yukamuli Uta" and Verse 2 of "Tsugaru Jongara-bushi": Matsushita making chromatic alterations to the melody, obscuring the earlier established tonic, and meandering through various tonalities before ultimately modulating the entire piece up a whole step. The prolonged modulation over the course of an entire verse makes the raising of a whole step feel smooth, like an intentional key change. In both "Yukamuli Uta" and "Tsugaru Jongara-bushi", the middle section slows down in tempo, but is still able to create a sense of intensity through its harmonic complexity. This tension is relieved at the arrival of the new key, at which the tempo is increased, providing a sense of inertia that drives the piece towards a close. In "Yukamuli Uta," the landing on A occurs right at the start of the interlude preceding Verse 4. This interlude is marked with an *accelerando* until settling at an Allegro at measure 141.

and Basses, are also singing in an imitative style on the rhythmic motif, mostly with an open Perfect fifth interval of A and E. There is an intentional avoidance of having a third in the chord, which would clarify a major or minor key, as Matsushita saves that for a dramatic effect at measure 165, the interlude leading to the final verse.

The arrival of a strong A major chord occurs on the altered refrain from Verse 4. Rather than the typical counting scheme seen in the earlier verses, this refrain instead proclaims, “*mada mada yarimasu, mattaku yarimasu*” (“Still we continue, we know, we continue”). This refrain also serves as the interlude between Verses 4 and 5. The difference in text combined with the sudden appearance of a strong major chord creates a dramatic contrast to the previous sections of the piece. Up until this point, the piece has been pentatonic, and then dissonant; now, suddenly, the consonance creates a sense of arrival.

The final verse, Verse 5, continues in a strong tonicization of A major, and opens with a canon-like figure between the female and male voices. Matsushita also introduces Body Percussion—hand clapping and thigh hitting—which is used to create dramatic interest. In Verse 5, there are two patterns of body percussion that are presented: The first is one hand clap followed by one thigh hit; the second is one hand clap followed by two thigh hits. Both patterns are scattered throughout the ensemble in specific orders to create a visual effect similar to a “body wave” that might be seen at sporting events. A visualization of the body percussion’s visual effects is represented in Figure 50. Pattern 1 is seen in green, and Pattern 2 is seen in blue. A final stomp is represented in red.

mm:	1 7 7	1 7 8	1 7 9	1 8 0	1 8 1	1 8 2	1 8 3	1 8 4	1 8 5	1 8 6	1 8 7	1 8 8	1 8 9	1 9 0	1 9 1	1 9 2	1 9 3	1 9 4	1 9 5	1 9 6	1 9 7	1 9 8	1 9 9	2 0 0	2 0 1	2 0 2	
S1:	■											■	■				■	■					■		■	■	■
S2:		■									■			■					■					■		■	■
A1:			■							■				■						■				■		■	■
A2:				■				■						■							■				■		■
T1:							■	■						■							■			■		■	■
T2:						■	■						■							■				■		■	■
B1:						■	■			■			■						■					■		■	■
B2:					■						■	■					■	■					■		■	■	■

Figure 50: A Representation of the Visual Effect Created by the Body Percussion Found in “Yukamuli Uta.”

The change in body percussion patterns also marks textural changes in the vocal writing, as the ensemble sings in a canon. Sopranos and Altos enter first in a three-part harmonization of the folk tune, and the Tenors and Basses enter one measure later, singing the same notes an octave lower. The canon figure comes to a close at measure 193, where the body percussion pattern changes. This also marks the beginning of the final refrain, which is sung in three-part homophonic texture by the Sopranos and Altos. The Tenors and Basses do not follow suit and instead sing a triadic accompanying rhythmic motif on the text, “*mada mada,*” meaning, “still, still.” The body percussion then ends, as the choir sings together, “*oshimaide,*” (now we finish), with the stomp occurring on the final syllable, “*de.*”

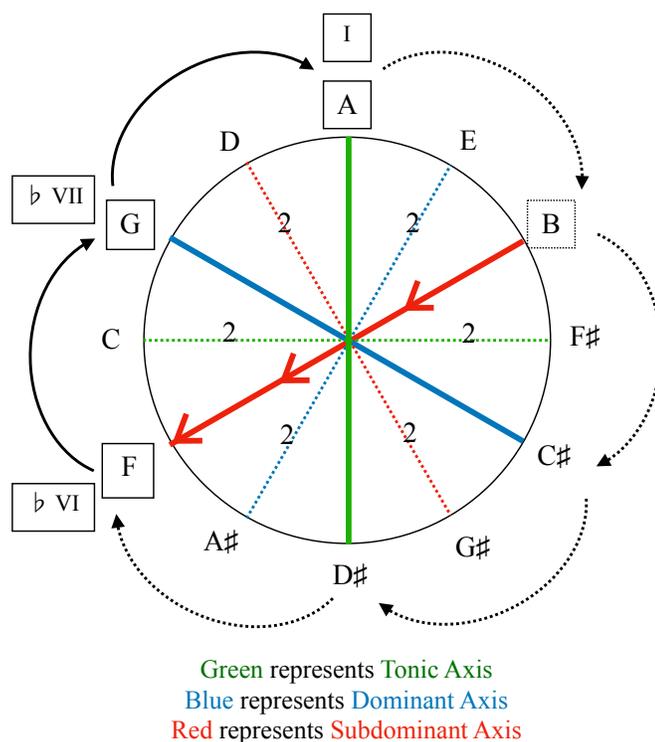
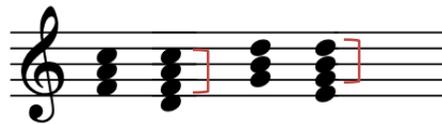


Figure 51: Axis Representation of the "Submediant Progression."

The mediant and submediant chords used in Verse 5 were foreshadowed by an interesting harmonic progression of A – F – G – A introduced in Verse 4. While there is no sense of major or minor quality to this figure, as they are written as parallel 5ths, an implied tonality of I–b VI–b VII–I can be heard. This harmonic progression is observed most easily in the Tenors and Basses in measures 157–164. This harmonic progression appears in his other works as well, such as the “Negoro no Jūjike ni” section of “Kotoba Asobi-uta.” The functional characteristics of this progression can be more easily visualized through the lens of an axis. The progression carries a Tonic – Subdominant – Dominant cyclical pattern that precedes a cadential point in the music, in the case of

“Yukamuli Uta” driving towards the final arrival of the A major chord in measure 165. The cycle can be seen as one that moves by every other tonal center on the circle of fifths, which is represented in the figure below by the number 2. Matsushita uses the counterpole of the first Subdominant move to F (b VI). From there, he follows the 2 pattern to go to G (b VII) and then back to A (I).

The pattern shown in Figure 51 allows for Matsushita to explore other interesting harmonies later in Verse 5 while being able to retain the same functional cycle of Tonic – Subdominant – Dominant, using substitutions on the counterpoles as well as on the axes. For example, the tonic A could be easily substituted for its chromatic mediant of C (b III), which occurs in measure 172. Similarly, the Dominant chord of G in the pattern could be substituted for E, which is what occurs in measure 198.



F d7 G e7
(Subdominant) (Dominant)

Figure 52: Functional relationships of substituted chords in Verse 5, mm 195–198.

Functions can be extended as well by moving from a chord within the pattern to one of the same functions on the same axis. An example of this can be seen in measures 195–196, where the Subdominant function of F is extended by the insertion of a D chord.

These substituted chords are often written with 7^{ths} and occasionally 11^{ths}, which underscores the axis relationship between certain harmonies (Figure 52). In both cases (F and D in measures 195–196 and the E substitution of G in 198), the original triad used in the submediant pattern are still present in the substituted chord. F major is embedded within D minor 7 and G major is embedded within E minor 7. These examples show how this is an effective way to retain the same functional pattern without needing to resort to exact repetition of existing harmonies—a clever tool in Matsushita’s compositional kit.

The image shows a musical score for four vocal parts: Soprano, Alto, Tenor, and Bass. The music is in 2/4 time and G major. The lyrics are:

Soprano: やります やります (ya-li-ma-su ya-li-ma-su)

Alto: やります やります (ya-li-ma-su ya-li-ma-su)

Tenor: まったく やります (ma-ta-ku ya-li-ma-su)

Bass: まったく やります (ma-ta-ku ya-li-ma-su)

A red box labeled 'b III' points to a chord in the Tenor part, which is a chromatic mediant (C major) relative to the key of G major. Vertical red lines connect the notes of this chord across the vocal staves.

Ko Matsushita YUKAMULI-UTA
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Figure 53: Tonic extension using chromatic mediant in "Yukamuli Uta," mm 172–173

Harmonically, one of the defining features of Verse 5 is the use of a chromatic mediant and submediant chords (C major and F major respectively, or \flat III and \flat VI) and \flat VII chords that appear throughout the verse. The chromatic mediant first appears in

measure 172, where the Sopranos and Altos sing a C major chord on top of an A major chord sung by the Tenors and Basses. The C major (♭ III) against the tonic A major (I), helps to emphasize the chromatic mediant of C. Later in measure 189, the Sopranos and Altos sing an F major triad—the chromatic submediant—against the chromatic mediant of C major, which is being sung by the Tenors and Basses. Matsushita, in a similar method to measure 172, introduces a new harmony on top of one that has been already present. The effect emphasizes the new harmony being introduced, while at the same time appearing seamlessly from the key.

The use of the chromatic mediant and submediant has been associated in Romantic and Contemporary music, particularly film and video game music, with characteristics such “magic” or “the hero.”²⁵¹ Given the legendary healing qualities of Yukamuri Onsen, the chromatic mediant and submediant chords, it is the author’s interpretation that they may act as a reflection of the magical properties of the *onsen*, or possibly a reference to the *ronin* heroes depicted in the verses based on *Chūshingura* and other popular eighteenth century Japanese literature.

This interpretation is fitting considering the final verse of Matsushita’s arrangement names two important characters from separate popular *kabuki* play of the time, *Honchōnijūkō: Takeda Katsuyori*, a young *daimyo* (warlord), and *Yaegaki-hime*, a princess who according to legend used the power of a magical helmet to fly over a frozen lake and save her lover, *Katsuyori*. In these two characters, there is a representation of

²⁵¹ Erik Heine, “Chromatic Mediants and Narrative Context in Film,” *Music Analysis* 37, no. 1 (2018), 103–132.

both “the hero” and “the magical.”²⁵² While Matsushita has neither confirmed nor denied the intention of these harmonies, given their already established association with the magical and triumphant, it would seem appropriate to interpret the chromatic mediant and submediant as possessing these narrative qualities.

This could be used to create a harmonic narrative seen across the entire piece as well. This harmonic narrative contains an exposition, a slowed down development and conflict, and then an acceleration to the end, matching the *jo-ha-kyū* aesthetic.²⁵³ The introduction and Verse 1 remain largely diatonic within the pentatonic scale, and welcomingly invites the listeners, or bathers, to enjoy the story about to be told. Verse 2 introduces some plot points and characters, notably the helmet of the rebellious nobleman, Nitta Yoshisada, the villainous samurai Moronao, and his rejected love letter to his rival En’ya’s wife.²⁵⁴ Potential conflict is foreshadowed with a few appearances of Tritones. Verse 3 then features great dissonance, with persistent Tritones creating harmonic tension leading into the key change the next verse. Verse 3’s text also is the darkest and bawdiest in theme, discussing lost innocence and waking up to see the world as a hellish place, a reference to the popular *rakugo* (spoken word drama), *Akegarasu*, whose young protagonist, Tokijiro, was tricked into going to a brothel and “becoming a

²⁵² Ibid.

²⁵³ See Chapter 4 for further detail on *jo-ha-kyū*.

²⁵⁴ These plot points are all within Act I of the *Bunraku* play, *Kanadehon Chūshingura*; Takeda Izumo, Miyoshi Shoraku, and Namiki Senryū, *Chūshingura, or the Treasury of Loyal Retainers*, trans. by Jukichi Inouye, 3rd edition, (Tokyo: Nakanishi-ya, 1917) 1–15.

playboy overnight.”²⁵⁵ Verse 4, which depicts Moronao engaging in a fight with En’ya, is a release of tension and a heightening of rhythmic energy to lead into a strong A major tonality at the start of Verse 5. The pairs of open perfect fifths, lack a third to determine minor or major, could be viewed as a fight for control between the virtuous En’ya and the treacherous Moronao: a battle between good and evil. The A major chord’s arrival possibly signifies a turning point in the struggle. Verse 5, although derived from a different drama, continues the narrative of conquering evil, with the chromatic mediant and submediant chords signifying the supernatural and the victorious. The use of extended harmony continues through the *prestissimo* Coda from measures 202–215, which brings the piece to a close. The narrative structure of “Yukamuli Uta” is reflected within Matsushita’s treatment of its form.

“Yukamuli Uta” showcases Matsushita’s adherence to character while demonstrating innovative and creative methods of composing around an existing folk melody and style. The defining feature of this folk song is the consistent dotted *Kaiyōminteki* rhythm that is present in the entirety of the piece. His technique of beginning with simpler scalar harmonies and building dissonance over the duration of the piece, a device presented in the other works studied, allows Matsushita to introduce new harmonic developments such as the use of tritones and submediants without obscuring

²⁵⁵ Morioka Heinz and Miyoko Sasaki, “*Rakugo the Popular Narrative Art of the Japan*,” (Cambridge, Mass: Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University: 1990), 26.

the original folk melody. Compositional devices such as antiphonal voicing, use of canon, and imitative body percussion which create interesting textures also can be interpreted as facilitating the imagery of the *Chūshingura* stories or the folksong's *onsen* origin. Matsushita's "Yukamuli Uta" is a classic example of his ability to express his own artistic expression through the mediums of choir and *minyō* as demonstrated by the preservation of folk character in conjunction with complex and creative compositional techniques.

Conducting and Rehearsal Considerations

"Yukamuli Uta" piece stays consistently in a 2/4 pattern, and while there are not any meter changes, Matsushita does include multiple tempo changes that require attention by both the ensemble and conductor. New tempi are always preceded by a tempo marking that either speeds up or slows down, such as *accelerando* or *ritardando*, and these occur at the interludes between sections.

Table 10: Tempo Alterations in "Yukamuli Uta."

Section:	Intro	V1	I1	V2	I2	V3	I3	V4	I4	V5*	Coda
Tempo: ¼ note =	120		<i>accel.</i>	142	<i>rit.</i>	120	<i>accel.</i>	160	<i>accel.</i>	186	200
Measures:	1-28	29-60	61-72	73-106	107-110	111-132	133-140	141-164	165-176	177-202	203-end

In Table 10 above, all tempo markings are listed in correspondence with their section. All verses are listed with the letter, V, followed by a number, and all interludes are listed with the letter, I, followed by a number. Transitional tempi devices are

highlighted, which clearly shows a relation between interludes and changes in tempo. Verse 5 is not followed by an interlude but does have one measure (measure 202) where Matsushita employs a *moto ritenuto* before the final tempo at the start of the Coda.

With the consistent dotted eighth rhythmic figure, measuring out these tempo changes in groupings of two measure segments in increasing speed settings is an effective method for altering the tempo. Rather than attempting to speed up or slow down within each beat, it is more practical to make these changes every two measures. This avoids issues with the placement of the sixteenth note within the dotted rhythmic figure and allows for cleaner entrances in these interludes, which are composed in an antiphonal-like fashion. For an example of a measured tempo alteration, the *accelerando* of the first interlude is visualized in Table 11 below.

Table 11: Measured *accelerando* in the first interlude, mm 65–72.

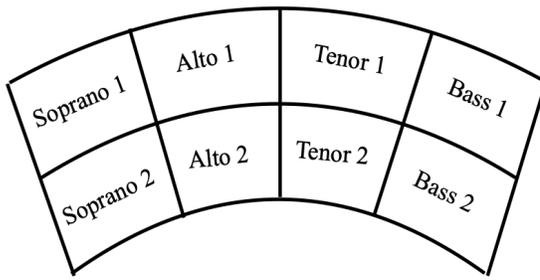
Tempo: 120 ————— <i>accel.</i> ————— 142			
speed 1	speed 2	speed 3	speed 4
mm 65-66	mm 67-68	mm 69-70	mm 71-72

As mentioned in the analysis, a conductor will need to consider the formation of their ensemble to achieve the sonic and visual effects provided by the body percussion in the final verse. There are a lot of antiphonal gestures and canon-like figures throughout the piece as well that would create interesting sonic effects when sung in a section-based formation; a mixed voice formation may obscure these elements.

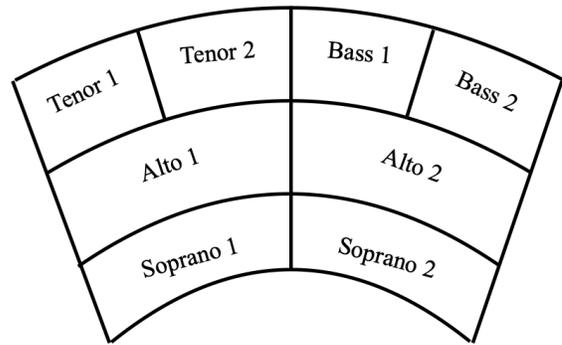
A standard SATB formation would suit the part writing and the body percussion well, but other section-based formations may also yield interesting results. One example can be seen in a performance by Machida-shi Tsurukawa Dai 2 Junior High School Choir at the 2013 NHK Concours in which they won third place at the national level.²⁵⁶ With originally added light choreography, their three-row formation (Sopranos and Altos in front two rows, Tenors and Basses in third row) created antiphonal and rippling effects as well. It should be noted, however, that in their performance the entrances of the body percussion were altered slightly to make a smoother wave effect that travelled across the ensemble.²⁵⁷ A comparison of their formation with a more standard SATB block formation can be seen in the Figure 54.

²⁵⁶ サズー心路 P, “N Kon 2013 Machida-shi Tsurukawa Di 2 Chūgakkō ‘Yukamuli Uta’”, October 16, 2013, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DixbAmGgooA&list=RD_W-SvPbOu9E&index=3; “NHK *Zenkoku Gakkō Ongaku Konkūru Rekidai Jūshōkō*” (NHK National School Music Concours Successive Award Winning Schools), N Kon no Ayumi, NHK, accessed October 22, 2021, https://www.nhk.or.jp/ncon/archives/successive_jh.html.

²⁵⁷ サズー心路 P, “N Kon 2013 Machida-shi Tsurukawa Di 2 Chūgakkō ‘Yukamuli Uta’”, October 16, 2013, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DixbAmGgooA&list=RD_W-SvPbOu9E&index=3.



Standard SATB Formation Example



Machida-shi Tsurukawa Dai 2 Junior High Choir Formation at 2013 NHK Concours

Figure 54: Examples of Choral Formations for “Yukamuli Uta.”

Another possible advantage of utilizing a section-based formation rather than a mixed formation is for the purposes of intonation, primarily in Verse 3 (mm 106–132) which is riddled with tritones in the sopranos and altos. A mixed formation is often utilized by choir directors to improve intonation, but due to the nature of voice pairings in “Yukamuli Uta,” a sectional formation allows voice parts that are paired together in certain sections of the piece to be closer together. The tritones in Verse 3 are paired as follows: Soprano 1 and Alto 1, Soprano 2 and Alto 2. This voice pairing is also present in Verse 4 in canon. A conductor may want to consider a formation that allows these voice pairings to be adjacent to each other.

The canon-like figures at the start of Verse 4 in the sopranos and altos and at Verse 5 in the entire choir can be challenging at first. The start of Verse 5 (mm 177–192) can be rehearsed easily by having everyone sing their respective parts starting at the same time (i.e., the tenors and basses shift their entrance at measure 178 to 177 to match the sopranos and altos). This works because the tenors and basses are essentially doubling the

sopranos and altos. Once the choir is comfortable enough singing the start of Verse 5 together, then they can sing as written with the measure offset. Verse 4 proves a little more challenging due to the harmony that Matsushita uses. Using a pair of perfect 5ths, the harmony sounds quartal, and there are consistent dissonances of primarily major seconds. Slowly singing the verse together and establishing comfort in the dissonance may be an effective rehearsal tool. It also may make greater sense to simply separate the two pairs of perfect fifths and rehearse those in isolation (i.e., Work with Soprano 1 and Alto 1 only first, and then focus efforts on Soprano 2 and Alto 2).

Due to the fast tempi of the piece, delivering the text in “Yukamuli Uta” can be challenging. This challenge is further exacerbated by the number of words within each of the five verses. There are moments when the number of syllables in the text do not match the notated rhythmic value, which can stump non-Japanese speakers. An example of this can be found in measure 119 in the tenor section. The text, “*okita no ga,*” is written to fit two dotted eighth note to sixteenth note pairings, which presents a dilemma of where to place the “*ki*” of “*okita*” within that dotted figure. What is most natural is to treat the syllable, “*ki*”, as simply a “*k*” consonant and sing the word “*okita*” as [okta]. This is consistent with devoicing vowels of [i] and [u] that occurs naturally in spoken Japanese.²⁵⁸

²⁵⁸ Naomi Ogasawara, “Lexical Representation of Japanese Vowel Devoicing,” *Language and speech* 56, no. 1 (2013): 5–22, DOI: 10.1177/0023830911434118, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0023830911434118>.

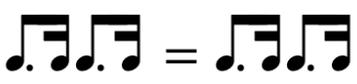
	
<i>oki-ta no ga o-hta no ga</i>	<i>e - kō shō e - kō shō</i>

Figure 55: Examples of syllabic and rhythmic modifications pertaining to text in “Yukamuli Uta”

Another example of the number of syllables not matching the notation occur in Verse 5 from measures 185–189 on the text, “*ekō shōto te.*” In this case, the sixteenth note in the dotted figure is missing a syllable. Singers will simply sing the “*ko*” of “*ekō*” as a quarter note. Discussing the poetic form of text, specifically how the chorus always ends with the first phrase of the following verse, will be beneficial to the choirs understanding the structure of the text.

“Yukamuli Uta” is an energetic piece with its upbeat tempi and the *Kaiyōminteki* dotted rhythm. It can be tempting to rush the tempo, especially with the incorporation of the body percussion at Verse 5. A strong and direct gesture may be employed to provide a clear pulse for the singers to follow. Incorporating movement that allows singers to physicalize tempi kinesthetically can also be a useful device. In addition, singing with a rigid and static body will not reflect the character of the piece. Although the folk song is associated with onsen, the tune is a popular bonodori song, which would be folk song that is danced to. Freedom of movement is essential to honoring the folk origins of the composition while simultaneously assisting in ensemble cohesiveness.

Pronunciation Guide and Translation

“Yukamuli Uta”

ヤレヤレ

Yare yare

[jare jare]

Yare yare!

始まる場所は因州因幡は

Hajimaru tokoro wa Inshu Inaba wa

[hadzimaruu tokoro wa inʃu: inaba wa]

The starting place is in Inshū Inaba

岩井の温泉湯かむり唄だよ

Iwai no onsen Yukamuri Uta dayo

[iwai onsen juukamuri uta dajo]

The onsen of Iwai, Yukamuli, this is the song.

三つに四つは五つでも六つ

Mitsu ni yottsu wa itsudemo muttsu

[mitsuni jot:tsu wa itsudemo mut:tsu]

Three, four, and we count to five, but six,

七な八つなら初めの音よ

Nanna yatsunara hajimeno otoyo

[nanna jatsunara hadzimenno otojo]

Seven, eight and we go back to the first note.

ヤレヤレ

Yare yare

[jare jare]

Yare yare!

初めの音よだおとに名高い

Hajime no otoyoda oto ni nadakai

[hadzime no otojoda oto ni nadakai]

The first note, in the notorious

鶴岡にて新田のお兜

Tsurugaoka ni te Nitta no Okabuto

[tsurugaoka ni te nit:ta no okabuto]

Tsurugaoka is the helmet of *Nitta*.

三つに四つは五つでも六つ

Mitsu ni yottsu wa itsudemo muttsu

[mitsuni jot:tsu wa itsudemo mut:tsu]

Three, four, and we count to five, but six,

七な八つなら二十歳の姉さん

Nanna yatsunara hatachi no nēsan

[nanna jatsunara hatatʃi no ne:san]

Seven, eight and then a girl of twenty.

ヤレヤレ
Yare yare
[jare jare]

Yare yare!

二十歳の姉さん人間世界は
hatachi no nēsan ningensekai wa
[hatatʃi no nēsan niŋensekai wa]

For a girl of twenty, the human world is

夢の泡雪寝たのが極楽
Yume no awayuki netano ga gokuraku
[juɱe no awajuuki netano ga gokuraku]

A bubbly snowy dream. While asleep, it is paradise.

起きたのが地獄よ
Okitano ga jigoku yo
[okitano ga dʒikoku jo]

When she wakes up it becomes hell.

明けの鳥は浦里時次郎
Akeno karasu wa Urazato tokijirō
[akeno karasu wa urazato tokidziro:]

The morning crow is *Urazato Tokijiro*.

三つに四つは五つでも六つ
Mitsu ni yottsu wa itsudemo muttsu
[mitsuni jot:tsu wa itsudemo mut:tsu]

Three, four, and we count to five, but six,

七な八つならお三の宿で
Nanna yatsunara Osan no yado de
[nanna jatsunara osan no jado de]

Seven, eight and then to the lodge of *Osan*.

ヤレヤレ
Yare yare
[jare jare]

Yare yare!

お三の宿で参勤交代当時日の出の
Osan no yado de sankinkoutai touji
hinode no
[osan no jado de saŋkinkōtai to:dʒi hinode
no]

In the lodge of *Osan*, under the duty of *sankinkoutai*,

足利将軍もてなし役目が
Ashikaga shogun motenashi yakume ga
[aʃikaga ʃo:gun motenaʃi jakume ga]

There is an officer of the *Ashikaga Shogun*

宴や判官師直雑言殿中けんかで綱乗
ものだよ
Enya hangan Moronao zōgon denchū
kenka de tsunanorimono da yo
[ɛnja hangan moronao zo:gon dentʃu:
kenka de tsunanorimono da jo]

At the banquet he and *Moronao* get into a
fight, which will be reported to the local
lord.

まだまだやります
Mada mada yarimasu
[mada mada jarimasu]

Still, we continue.

まったくやりますやりますやります
Mattaku yarimasu yarimasu yarimasu
[mat:taku jarimasu jarimasu jarimasu]

We know, we continue, we continue, we
continue.

やりますお七ははやる年まだ
Yarimasu ohichi wa hayaru toshimada
[jarimasu oçitʃi wa hajaruu toʃimada]

We continue, *Ohichi* is a fashionable year

八重垣姫には
Yaegaki hime ni wa
[jaɛgaki çime ni wa]

For Princess Yaegaki,

武田の勝頼会候しょうとて
Takeda no Katsuyori ekō shō to te
[takeda no katsujori eko: ʃo: to tɛ]

Takeda Katsuyori is suitable.

会には欠かせぬ反魂香だよ
E ni wa kakasenu hangonko dayo
[ɛ ni wa kakasenu hangonko dajo]

We cannot miss the *Hangan-ko*.

三つに四つは五つでも六つ
Mitsu ni yottsu wa itsudemo muttsu
[mitsumi jot:tsu wa itsudemo mut:tsu]

Three, four, and we count to five, but six,

七な八つならおしまいであり申す。
Nanna yatsunara oshimai de arimōsu.
[nanna jatsunara osan no jado dɛ]

Seven, eight and then to go to the end.

CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION

This dissertation has covered multiple aspects of Japan's choral music and traditional folk music, as well as the background of Japanese composer, Ko Matsushita, culminating in a comprehensive analysis of five of his choral works. Choral music in Japan started as a hybrid art form, blending the Western medium of a choral ensemble with Japanese culture, and since its inception has been a vehicle to promote Japanese culture and identity, as evidenced by *shoka* singing in schools during the Meiji Era.²⁵⁹ The post-WWII era brought on significant developments in choral music, most notably the dawning of national-level choral competitions such as the NHK Concours and the JCA Concours.

Japan has a rich and unique choral tradition that should be studied and performed in the West. Matsushita is a major contributor to the current repertoire of Japanese choral music as well as a leading figure in choral organizations and festivals, such as the International Choral Organization of Tokyo (ICOT) and the Karuizawa International Choral Festival.²⁶⁰ His initiatives, along with the activities of the JCA and the NHK Concours competitions, have served as vehicles to promote and celebrate Japan's unique choral tradition, which includes elements of Japanese folk traditions. Through the works of composers like Matsushita, Japanese folk music has made a resurgence in the choral

²⁵⁹ Palmer, "Choral Music in Japan," 1.

²⁶⁰ "Home," ICOT, accessed November 25, 2021, https://www.icot.or.jp/en/home_en.

world. It is through the performances of *minyō*-based choral works that these culturally valuable assets are being preserved in the modern lives of those who participate in choirs across Japan.

Understanding his process and motivations in composing *minyo*-based music can guide conductors and choirs on how to approach them. The analyses show the intentional prioritization of preserving the character of each folk song. Yet, while he discusses “dynamic preservation” as a method to keep these folk songs alive in the present, he does not believe his pieces should be exclusive to Japan. In the preface of *Ki-no-kuni no Kodomo Uta 3*, he writes, “... ‘I would be very pleased if these songs contribute to reminding the Japanese chorus of significance of ‘sound’ that is unique to Japanese language.’ I am pleased with the fact that recently Japanese choruses pay more attention to the folk music of their own country. Especially those of the young generations such as the junior and senior high schools who choose folkloric music more often. I have also commented that I would be even more delighted if foreign choruses were interested in the Japanese folk music. I am aware that some Asian and European choruses have sung the songs of this series. I am deeply impressed and pleased to know that they can enjoy the sound of Japanese tradition through my songs.”²⁶¹

Matsushita sees Japanese folk music as significant and special. In our interview, Matsushita hypothesized that, due to being an island nation with a history of isolationism, Japan developed unique musical folk traditions with minimal foreign influences until the

²⁶¹ Matsushita, *Ki-no-kuni no Kodomo Uta 3*, 2.

end of the Tokugawa Shogunate (1603–1868).²⁶² In addition, the geography of Japan influenced many of the developments of folk music. The mountainous terrain, rugged coastlines, and varying climates resulted in isolated communities that created regional dialects and musical styles. The primary example of this is *Minyō*—a multi-faceted folk musical tradition that conveys aspects such as Japanese mythology, traditional literature, types of activities, and regional identity. Since folk songs in Japan carry strong affiliations to specific places, it is common to include the name of a town or village in the title of the folk song, as evidenced by four of the five pieces listed in this dissertation.²⁶³

As such, *minyō* is inextricably linked to the concept of *furusato*. *Furusato* roughly translates to, “my old country home,” and refers to an idealization of one’s hometown that to many Japanese is an “ongoing source of identity, nostalgia, and solace.”²⁶⁴ *Furusato*, along with an admiration of *minyō*, can be seen as an escape for the majority Japanese population, which lives in urban centers such as Tokyo and Osaka. Performers and listeners of *minyō* express a sense of nostalgia for these places that often depict older and more rural livelihoods. While there are many societies, local festivals, and organizations that focus on preserving *minyō* through recordings and traditional styled performances, Matsushita uses contemporary choral arrangements to keep the folk music of Japan alive.

²⁶² Matsushita, interview by author.

²⁶³ The four pieces discussed in this paper named after places in Japan are: “Aizu Bandaisan”, “Tsugaru Jongarabushi”, “Itsuki no Komori Uta”, “Yukamuli Uta.”

²⁶⁴ Hughes, 1.

Minyō has largely been confined to Japan and has played a “miniscule part in the ‘World Music’ phenomenon.”²⁶⁵ By providing analysis, background information, conducting considerations, pronunciation guides, and translations, this dissertation intends to make the studied pieces accessible to non-Japanese choirs and equip conductors with the necessary knowledge to provide an in-depth experience of the folk songs and Matsushita’s compositional style. There is an opportunity for *minyō* to be shared outside of Japan, and this study shows that the choral works of Matsushita can be a viable avenue to do so. The information derived from this research and analysis constructs a path for performances of *minyō*-based choral music to be approached in an intentional and substantive manner—avoiding programmatic tokenism or “insincere appreciation and disingenuous displays of diversity.”²⁶⁶ Comprehending the significance of *minyō* in the folk tradition of Japan and Matsushita’s motivations for composing such works is crucial to developing performances that demonstrate culturally accurate and respectful performances.

Identifying the elements of Japanese folk song is essential to understanding how Matsushita composes pieces based on *minyō*. There is extensive ethnomusicological research and literature on Japanese folk song, notably by Fumio Koizumi, that provides substantial background knowledge on musical aspects including folk song typology, scales, rhythmic styles, poetic forms, and artistic aesthetics.

²⁶⁵ Ibid, 2.

²⁶⁶ Patrick J. Doran, “Non-Traditional Music Classes in Secondary Public School Music Programs” (master’s thesis, Western Washington University, 2020), 29.

Koizumi's tetrachord method of scalar analysis for Japanese pentatonic scales is widely accepted by Japanese folk song scholars, and this method serves as a basis for Matsushita's approach to harmonizing of Japanese folk songs in his choral works. The rhythmic styles of *Oiwake* and *Yagibushi* affect Matsushita's decisions on meter and tempo, and his further distinguishing of a *Kaiyōminteki* rhythmic style reflects his diligence in observing the uniqueness of regional folk music. This is exemplified in "Tsugaru Jongara-bushi" and "Yukamuli Uta," where Matsushita places rhythm at the forefront, since the use of specific rhythms are key characteristics of both folk songs.

Matsushita's use of harmony reflects his training both in Japan and abroad in Hungary. Inspired by Bartók, who used pentatonic Hungarian folk music in his compositions, Matsushita sought out a method to create pieces based on pentatonic Japanese folk tunes. The analyses of the selected pieces reveal Bartók's influence on Matsushita, primarily the employment of Tritone relationships as seen through the lens of the Axis System. Matsushita states, "The first thing I noticed about Bartók's composition skills was the 'axis system.' This idea of expanding the functions of classical harmony theory to the whole twelve notes of the circle of fifths, can be applied with great effects to constructing Japanese melody formation which does not have functional harmony."²⁶⁷ Matsushita's compositional style in relation to the Axis System was explored during the analyses of "Aizu Bandaisan" and "Yukamuli Uta," although there are interesting tonal

²⁶⁷ Matsushita, "Distinction of Japanese Native Sound Formation and Attempt of Fusing with Choral Music," 192.

shifts and harmonic progressions that point to use of this system in the other pieces studied as well.

There is a general harmonic form found in the works of Ko Matsushita. He often starts diatonically to the folk song's pentatonic scales, first employing quartal and quintal harmonies, and then progresses to adding non-scalar tones and dense harmonic textures. Each of the five pieces studied demonstrate a dissonant middle section that culminated in a modulation. These modulating and dissonant middle sections are areas where Matsushita utilizes harmonic progressions that are congruent with the use of the Axis System. His harmonization of the pentatonic melodies includes the use of chromatic mediant and submediant chords, particularly featured in the analysis of "Yukamuli Uta." By increasing the harmonic complexity progressively, Matsushita is able to strongly showcase the melody of the folk song being arranged at the beginning of the piece. This establishes a clear sense of the melody for both singers and audiences that is carried throughout the entirety of the piece. Even in the most tonally dissonant sections, Matsushita will still prioritize melodic line through use of tessitura and canon-like imitative gestures, which is highly evident in Renaissance styled polyphony of the middle section of "Tsugaru Jongara-bushi". Across these works, he demonstrates how tonality can be obscured while the subject matter remains intact.

Matsushita certainly employs artistic expression in his writing, but always preserves the character of these folk songs in his arrangements. Although he sometimes changes the rhythm or meter (e.g., "Aizu Bandaisan" and "Kotoba-asobi Uta") he never loses the essence of the original tune. He thoroughly conducts research when creating a

minyō choral work, and the analyses and research show Matsushita's intentionality behind these compositions. The ever-present dotted *Kaiyōminteki* rhythm of "Yukamuli Uta," for example, demonstrates his ability to focus on a unique element of a folk song and highlight it by playing a major thematic or motivic idea.

Many of Matsushita's commissioned pieces are written for specific choirs in mind, and he considers their vocal capabilities with the same intentionality that he places in the musical elements of the folk songs that he arranges. Each *minyō* based choral work has an individuality to it because Matsushita's compositional process focuses on an ensemble's forces and the distinguishing features of the folk song being arranged. This has attracted many choirs in Japan to his *minyō*-based choral works, since the arrangements allow them to celebrate a culturally valuable asset while providing a challenging yet rewarding experience.

Yet, these works should not be bound within the borders of Japan. Matsushita would like his *minyō* based choral works to be performed by choirs from around the globe. A major limitation to accessing his work, and Japanese choral works in general, in the USA is simply that there are not as many published studies, articles, dissertations, and programs that include the choral music from Japan. Through research in this dissertation, there is no evidence of an extant dissertation in the English-speaking world that is solely devoted to Ko Matsushita. This document seeks to remedy that, giving scholarly evidence to provide further opportunity for conductors to study and perform his works. Japanese choral music makes up a very small share of performed choral works in the USA, and there is room to expand the repertoire of Japanese choral music performed on this side of

the Pacific. In the past, barriers such as language, shipping costs, and publication methods have made it difficult to bring these pieces by Matsushita to the USA.²⁶⁸

Some of these barriers to performing his music outside of Japan, however, are being eased as the world transitions from printed music to digital editions which are available instantly. This is observed in music distribution sites such as JW Pepper, Hal Leonard, and Sheet Music Plus in the United States. In Japan, companies such as Zen-On Music and Edition Kawai are starting to have digitally printed options.²⁶⁹ More recently, Edition ICOT, a publishing company affiliated with International Choral Organization of Tokyo (ICOT) of which Matsushita serves as Executive Director, allows for digital purchases of almost all their published works.²⁷⁰ These types of initiatives in publishing allow for the choral world to breakdown its regional silos and become more globalized. It is the author's belief that this is a benefit to choral music as a whole and will foster camaraderie as choirs and composers from various cultures interact with each other. It will be necessary as modern choral educators and conductors in the USA to be familiar with living composers from abroad and of non-Western musical traditions.

²⁶⁸ For example, all the pieces studied in this dissertation are published in small books as part of a set, the price of which currently range from 1,400 yen to 2,000 yen (roughly \$14–\$20) without tax and shipping. To perform a single piece from one of these books is cost prohibitive. With these publications, it is the author's suggestion that choirs utilize all the pieces within these books either all at once as a set or by performing single pieces over the course of time.

²⁶⁹ Edition Kawai, <http://www.editionkawai.jp>.

²⁷⁰ "Greeting for the Publication of Edition ICOT, 07/01/2020," News, Edition ICOT, <https://edition.icot.or.jp/news/?lang=en>.

As to the study of *minyō*-based choral music, there have been other dissertations and articles written on this subject already (Howles, Kishimoto, Palmer), but they represent a minority of the studies that have been undertaken. There can be further study into another Japanese composer, or group of composers, who write in this style of making choral pieces based off *minyō* tunes.

Regarding the choral works of Matsushita in general, one of the limitations of this dissertation was that it only dealt with pieces based on *minyō*. Matsushita composes in a variety of other styles and topics such as Christian sacred music, “études aimed to improve the skills of choirs and leaders,” “arrangements of pop music and Japanese school songs,” and other original works that ranges from a cappella pieces to orchestral accompaniments.²⁷¹ Further detailed study can be conducted to look in depth at his other works.

Finally, further study can be done into the choral groups that Matsushita conducts. These groups are often the first to see his new pieces, and some of them are made up of professional singers. They would have insight into his conducting and rehearsal approaches towards his own works, as well as first-hand knowledge of his thoughts and philosophies on choral music.

It is clear in through the presented readings, analysis, and discussion with the Matsushita, that he regards *minyō* as an important part of Japan’s unique cultural

²⁷¹ “Interview of Ko Matsushita: Composing music for God and to unify the heart of people around the world,” interview by Andrea Angelini, *International Choral Bulletin*, (July 2, 2016), http://icb.ifcm.net/en_US/matsushita_interview/.

heritage. In our interview, when asked what the most important consideration should be when arranging *minyō*, he stated that the subject matter—the character—must not be obscured. This does not limit him, however, in his creativity. His ability to blend contemporary compositional techniques with Japanese folk material creates artistic and innovative pieces. His work in *minyō*-based choral music contributes to the dynamic preservation of *minyō*. This repertoire can and should be explored by choirs outside of Japan and would contribute to the cultural sharing and understanding that we must strive for in a global music community.

APPENDIX

Appendix A: Map of Japan

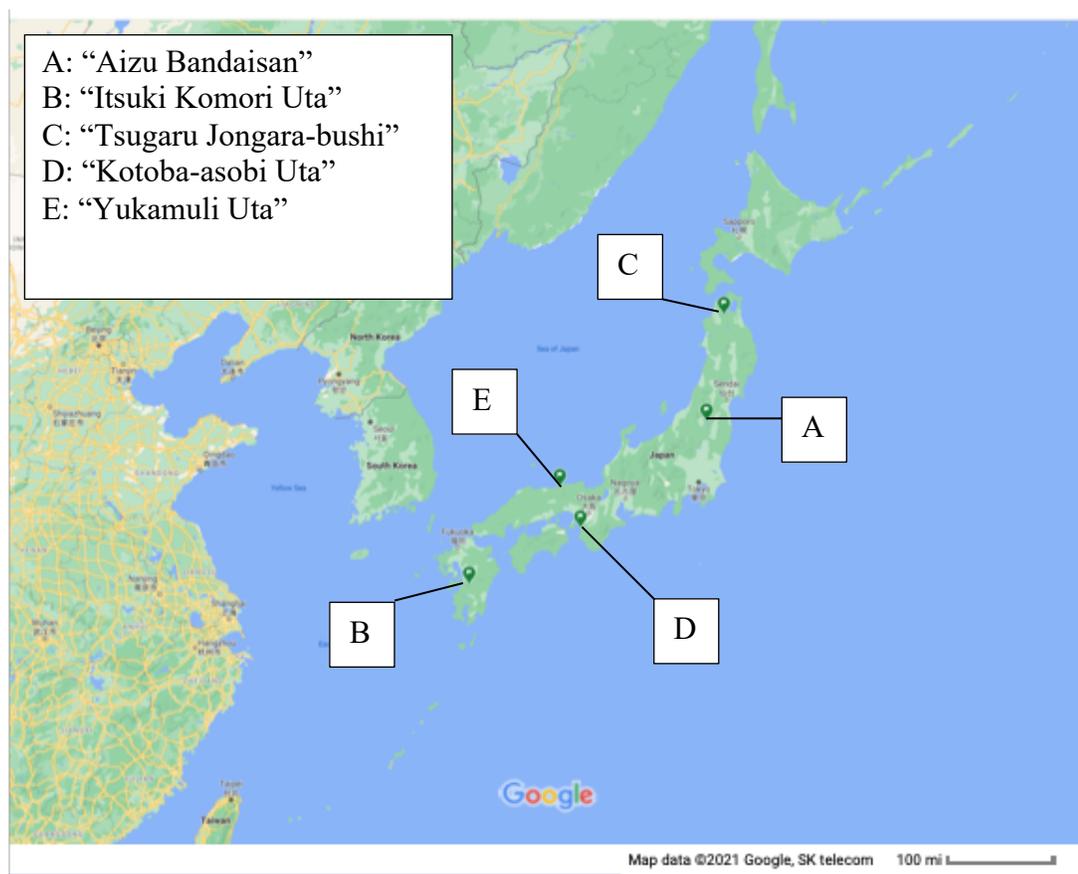


Figure 56: Map of Japan with Points of Folk Song Origin²⁷²

²⁷² "Map of Japan," Google Maps, accessed December 19, 2020.

Appendix B: Glossary of Japanese Terms

Bachi — Plectrum, or pick, used to strum the strings of the *shamisen*.

Bushi — Song or tune.

Chūshingura — Art and literature based on the fictionalized accounts of the 47 *ronin*.

Daimyō — Feudal lords who served the shogunate.

Dan — A term to indicate a section within a Tsugaru-jamisen styled *kyokubiki* piece. A popular piece in Tsugaru-jamisen repertoire is “Roku-dan” (six *dan*.)

Dodoitsu — A poetic meter found in Japanese folk songs and literature that is characterized by a 7-7-7-5 pattern.

Furusato — One’s hometown; A sense of nostalgia for one’s hometown.

Hakata-ben — A Japanese dialect spoken in Kyūshū.

Hayashi — Nonsensical vocables that are either sung in between verses or as part of a verse in Japanese folk music, typically sung as a response to the lead singer’s melody.

Jo-ha-kyū — A three phased structural aesthetic found in Japanese art, drama, literature, and music. (See Chapter 4: Elements of Japanese Folk Music, *Jo-ha-kyū*)

Kabuki — A Japanese classical theatrical artform characterized by highly stylized productions involving costumes, dance, and distinctive make-up.

Kakegoe — Type of nonsensical vocable but is used often in a preparatory function, usually expressed as a loud and short shout, such as “*hai*” or “*sore*.”

Kakuon — Nuclear tones, the notes that are a fourth apart are referred by Koizumi in his research as *kakuon*.

Kaiyōminteki — A term used by Matsushita to describe the rhythmic style of seafaring *minyō*. See Chapter 4, “Rhythmic Styles.”

Kobushi — A type of vocal ornamentation found in Japanese folk singing.

Komori — A child slave who watches the children of wealthier masters. As forms of slavery were legal during this long period of history, it was a common practice for

a peasant class family to sell a child to a wealthier family to work as a caregiver, or *komori*, to their children.

Kyokubiki — A solo Tsugaru-jamisen piece, most often refers to a solo improvisation, although it may include *minyō* music.

Minyō — Japanese folk music

Minyō Scale — Type of Japanese folk scale, defined by Koizumi as being composed of two disjunct tetrachords that are characterized by a minor third interval (Tetrachord I).

Miyakobushi Scale — Type of Japanese folk scale, defined by Koizumi as being composed of two disjunct tetrachords that are characterized by a minor second interval (Tetrachord II).

Nōh — A Japanese classical dance-drama in which wear masks are utilized to portray various characters.

Oiwake — A rhythmic style designated to *minyō* that are regarded as free of meter. This style is often melismatic and soloistic. See Chapter 4, “Rhythmic Styles.”

Onsen — Japanese hot spring.

Rakugo — “Fallen words,” a form of Japanese spoken entertainment. The artform involves a single orator portraying multiple characters, who delivers the story in a seated position using only a paper fan and a handcloth as props. *Rakugo* stories are often comedic.

Ritsu Scale — Type of Japanese folk scale, defined by Koizumi as being composed of two disjunct tetrachords that are characterized by a major second interval (Tetrachord III).

Ryūkōka — Translates literally to “popular song,” and is a term used to denote the genre of Japanese popular music that preceded *enka*.

Ryūkyū Scale — Type of Japanese folk scale, defined by Koizumi as being composed of two disjunct tetrachords that are characterized by a major third interval (Tetrachord IV).

Shamisen — Japanese three stringed banjo-like instrument. There are variations of the instrument found throughout Japan that differ in size and playing style.

Shōgun — Military dictators that ruled feudal Japan from 1185–1868.

Uta – Song

Yagibushi — A rhythmic style designated for *minyō* that possess a meter, named after the *minyō* of the same name. This style is often associated with group performance. See Chapter 4, “Rhythmic Styles.”

Appendix C: Herford Analysis Charts

The following analysis charts are inspired by Julius Herford’s method demonstrated in *Choral Conducting, A Symposium* by Harold A. Decker and Julius Herford. Each chart is constructed with a horizontal timeline that represents the duration of the piece. Major sections are outlined by the bracketing towards the top of the chart, and smaller subdivisions are outlined by the arches above the timeline. Phrase groupings are numbered below the timeline, which are color coded with the smaller subdivision arches. Comments are listed within the brackets of each section and are color coded with corresponding subdivisions as well. Other information such as tonal centers, measure numbers, and texture is listed below the timeline. These charts may be used as a listening guide.

Appendix C-1: “Aizu Bandaisan”

Summarized Analysis Chart of “Aizu Bandaisan” from *Nihon no Minyō Dai 1 Shū* by Ko Matsushita

	Introduction	Verse 1	Verse 2	Interlude	Verse 1'	Coda
	(2+2+2+2+3)	(4+2+4+1+4+3)	(2+2+2+5+2+2+2)	(2+2+2+3+2)	(4+2+4+4+2+3+3)	(2+1+3)
mm: 1	12	30	46	58	84	
Tonality: D	G Phrygian/C minor	D Phrygian/ G minor	Modulation	G# Phrygian/ C# minor		
Texture: Polyphony	Monophony	Polyphony	Homophony	Homophony – Polyphony		

Musical Notes:

- Introduction:**
1. Descending arpeggiated “Falling Snow” gesture, chords built on P4ths and P5ths.
 2. Descending chordal hemiola
 3. Ascending arpeggiated inversion of “Falling Snow” gesture.
- Verse 1:** Unaltered statement of the folk tune. Matsushita leaves this to be sung in unison or as a solo.
1. *Kakegoe*: “*Iya*” as solo or unison in Part I.
 2. Phrase 1: Unison Part I.
 3. Phrase 2: Unison Part I.
- Verse 2:**
1. Shift in tonality, canon-like imitation at 6th interval begins on text, “*iya,*” in Parts II and III.
 2. Continuation of canon, Part I’s entrance cadences the phrase and voices end together on open perfect intervals.
 3. Points of imitation, using melodic fragment as a recurring musical idea. Cadences together on a clustered tonic chord (D^{5/4})
- Interlude:** Uses an inverted melodic fragment as motivic device to modulate.
1. G-D x 2
 2. A-E ♭ x 2
 3. Descending triplet figure transitions out of Interlude.
E-E ♭ -B ♭ -A-A ♭
- Verse 1’:** Expanded Recapitulation of V1
1. “*Iya*” call in call and response between sopranos and ensemble.
 2. Dramatic Chorale-like harmonization of tune (homophonic)
 3. Imitative ascension of Phrase 1 excerpt on text, “*Takara no Yama yo,*” sung in Parts II and III. Part I sustaining a C#.
 4. Melody between Parts I and II, contrary motion in the voices, mixture of textures, but mostly homophonic with short imitative gestures.
- Coda:**
1. “Falling Snow” motif.
 2. Unison C# to final chord (C# M9)

Summarized Analysis Chart of “Aizu Bandaisan”
from *Nihon no Minyō Dai 2 Shū* by Ko Matsushita

Introduction	Verse 1		Verse 2	Interlude	Verse 1'	Coda
	<i>Kakegoe</i> Ext.	Verse Body				
(1+2+2+2+2+2+2+2)	(4+2+1+4)	(2+4+1+2+2+2+2)	(2+2+1+2+2+2+1+2+1+2+1)	(3+2+2+3+2)	(4+2+4+4+2+4+4)	(2+1+3)
mm: 1	17	28	43	61	74	97 102
Tonality: D	G Phrygian/ C minor		D Phrygian/ G minor	Modulation	G# Phrygian/ C# minor	
Texture: Polyphony	(Polyphony)	Monophony– Polyphony–Homophony	Polyphony	Homophony	Homophony — Polyphony	

Musical Notes:

- Introduction:**
- Opening antiphonal aleatoric device where two halves of the choir sing the vocable, “*lun*,” in increasing frequency back and forth on the pitch D.
 - Building of “Falling Snow” Motif
 - Full statements of “Falling Snow Motif”
- Verse 1:**
- Kakegoe Extension:
- “*Iya*” unison in choir Sopranos
 - Ascending “wind” figure + “falling snow” motif (in Octet)
 - Quintal layering of “*iyā*.”
- Verse Body:
- First phrase: Unison choir Sopranos followed by “falling snow” in Octet
 - Second phrase: Polyphonic to homophonic texture in choir
- Verse 2:**
- Verse 2:**
- Verse 2 Accompaniment figure in Octet begins, canon-like imitation at 6th interval begins on text, “*iyā*,” in choir.
 - V2 Accompaniment continues, Stepwise descending/ascending parallel P5ths in Octet; First phrase of Verse 2 in choir.
 - Ascending “wind” figure in Octet, choir sings second phrase in imitative texture.
- Interlude:**
- Uses an inverted melodic fragment as motivic device to modulate.
- G-D x 2
 - A-E ♭ x 2
 - Descending triplet figure transitions out of Interlude.
E-E ♭ -D; B ♭ -A-A ♭
- Verse 1':**
- Expanded Recapitulation of V1
- “*Iya*” call in call and response between sopranos and ensemble.
 - Dramatic Chorale-like harmonization of tune (homophonic)
 - Imitative ascension of Phrase 1 excerpt in Octet; Chordal descending moment in choir
 - Imitative ascension in choir; Chordal descending movement in Octet; Final imitative ascension in full ensemble.
- Coda:**
- “Falling Snow” motif.
 - Unison C# to final cluster chord

Appendix C-2: “Itsuki no Komori Uta”

Summarized Analysis Chart of “Itsuki no Komori Uta” from *Nihon no Minyō Dai 2 Shū* by Ko Matsushita

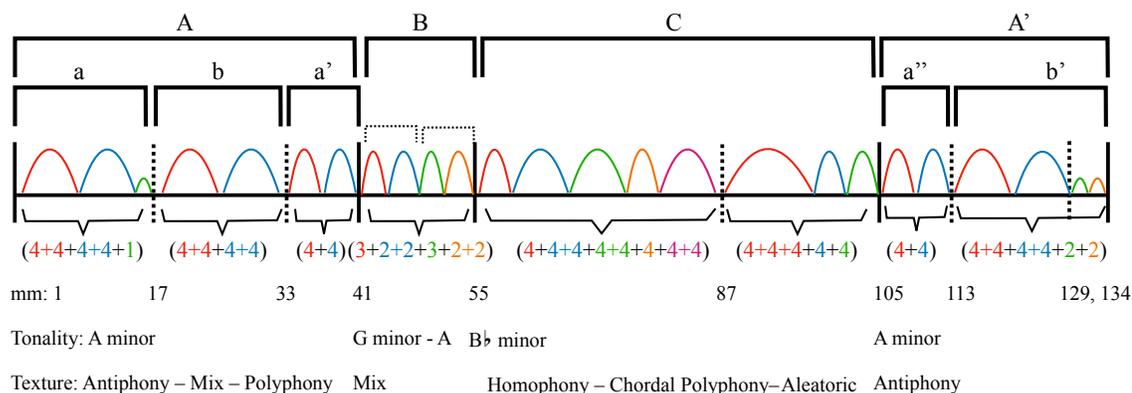
Introduction	A	A'	B	C	D	A''	C'	Coda	
mm: 1	10	21	30	43	53	61	72	81	87
Tonality: D minor			D minor —		A minor		A minor – C minor		
Texture: Polyphony		Imitation	Polyphony	Homophony	Imitation	Monody	Homophony	Chordal	

Musical Notes:

- Introduction:**
1. Layered ascension of melodic fragment, contrary motion in lower voices
 2. Descending arpeggiated 3rds pattern, ascending soprano line
 3. Descending motion in upper voices with ascending in lower voices
- A:**
1. Introduction of “Accompaniment Figure”
 2. Verse 1 melody is presented monodically over the accompaniment figure. Matsushita also varies the meter in the middle grouping, creating a free meter feel.
 3. Accompaniment figure transitions to Verse 2.
- A':**
1. Verse 2 melody is presented in imitation over the accompaniment figure. Groupings and meter changes are largely repeated from before
 2. Accompaniment figure ends to create a clean break before the next section.
- B:**
1. Verse 2 fragment (final phrase of Verse 1) in imitation.
 2. Verse 1 fragment variation in imitation
 3. Material from Verse 1 are written in polyphonic texture; Matsushita creates a slow ascending figure in the lower voices based off of Verse 2 text.
 4. Shift to 3/4 time signature. Matsushita is using fragments of Verse 1 to modulate from D minor to A minor.
- C:**
1. Start of Verse 3 text; First iteration of the “Crying Phrase”; motion is ascending.
 2. The section peaks and begins to descend in pitch. Matsushita maintains the *Kobushi-like* ornamentation in the melodic line sung by Soprano 1.
 3. Final phrase of section C; Homophonic contrary inward motion and decrescendo to *piano*; sustained E octave between S1 and A2 transitions to next section.
- D:**
1. Verse 4 melody enters in imitation in the inner voices while the sustained octave continues in the outer voices.
 2. Melody transfers to A2, upper three voices sustaining quartal based chord suspension chord.
 3. Final line of text is sung at an octave interval.
 4. Variation of Accompaniment Figure appears and transitions into a recapitulation of A.
- A'':**
1. Like previous A sections, the melody is presented in conjunction with the Accompaniment Figure. The melody is presented monodically and not in imitation.
 2. The Accompaniment Figure ends the section on a clear break.
- C':**
1. Variation of the “Crying Phrase” which is lengthened to modulate up to C minor at the climax of the phrase.
 2. The “Crying Phrase” is fragmented and repeated three more times, with each iteration simplifying in harmony to end in parallel octave motion. Sustained G octave transitions the piece to the Coda.
- Coda:**
1. Disjunct iterations of the Accompaniment Figure bring the piece to a close.

Appendix C-4: “Kotoba-asobi Uta”

Summarized Analysis Chart of “Kotoba-asobi Uta” from *Ki no Kuni no Kodomo Uta 3* by Ko Matsushita



Musical Notes:

A :
(*Sōga Mura no Sonchō-san*)

a: Introduction of Motif 1

1. Parts I and II introduce Motif 1. This original motivic idea by Matsushita is passed back and forth between the two voices to represent play. Part III joins on the second statement of the theme an octave below Part I.
2. Part III introduces an accompanying pattern to Motif 1, which is a series of eighth notes accentuating beats 1 and 3, mostly sung at the interval of a P5.
3. Sustained A \flat transition chord

b: *Sōga-mura no Sonchō-san*

1. Melody of “*Sōga-mura no Sonchō-san*” is sung in Part III with other voices singing Motif 1 material.
2. Melody (now in Part II) is harmonized by Part I at a P5 interval; Parts III and IV are on Motif 1 material.

a': Closing Interlude on Motif 1

1. Motif 1 alone in Parts II and III
2. Accompanying pattern enters in Part IV

B:
(*Negoro no Jūjūike ni*)

Matsushita constructs this section in a symmetrical method.

1. Melody in unison in Parts I and II; A \flat transition chord in Parts III and IV
2. Melody in imitation in Parts I and II, Variation of A \flat suspension chord in Parts III and IV; Ascending “*ja*” figure that transitions melody to Parts III and IV and harmony to Parts I and II.
3. Melody in unison in Parts III and IV; A Major Triad to Major chords progression in Parts I and II.
4. Melody in imitation in Parts II and IV; Variation of A major triad in Parts I and II; Ends in homophonic cadence.

C:
(*Bero bero no Kamisama*)

1. The first phrase grouping establishes 7/8 time through the introduction of the ostinato figure.
2. The melody is introduced and sung by Part II while Parts III and IV sing the ostinato.
3. Part I joins in on the melody in unison with Part II
4. Melody drops out for a moment and is replaced by the *misterioso* dissonant descending line in Part I. This foreshadows the aleatoric section that will come later; Ostinato continues in Parts III and IV.
5. Melody enters again in Part II, Part I continues to devolve, Parts III and IV continue ostinato.
6. Melody is harmonized in Parts I and II in P5 intervals; Ostinato figure is broken in Parts III and IV; Part III begins aleatoric patterns
7. Ostinato figure disappears as Part IV begins aleatoric patterns
8. At measure 103, all parts are singing aleatoric patterns in organized chaos which concludes with a final portamento on “*bero*”.

A':
(*Sōga Mura no Sonchō-san*)

Recapitulation of A – End

1. Motif 1 returns in Parts I and II
2. Part IV reintroduces the accompanying pattern to Motif 1.
3. Melody of “*Sōga-mura no Sonchō-san*” returns in one full iteration in Part III while all other voices sing Motif 1 material.
4. *Poco a poco diminuendo*; Melody is segmented into one measure statements followed by one measure of rest.
5. Final statement of Motif 1 material. Matsushita ends Motif 1 at its midpoint.
6. Playful pitched speaking on the text, “*Shinda? Sōda!*”, closes the piece.

Appendix C-5: “Yukamuli Uta”

Summarized Analysis Chart of “Yukamuli Uta” from *Nihon no Min'yō Dai 7 Shū* by Ko Matsushita

	Intro	V1	I 1	V2	I 2	V3	I 3	V4	I 4	V5	Coda
	(2+2+2+2+ 4+4+4+4)	(2+2+4+4+6+2+ 4+4+4+2+2)	(2+2+ 2+2+2+2)	(2+4+4+5+7 +4+4+2+2)	(2+2+4+6 +4+4+4)	(2+2+ 2+2+4)	(6+6+8)	(2+2+ 4+4)	(2+6+2+2+ 4+4+5+1)	(4+4+2+3)	
mm: 1		25	61 73		107, 111	133 145		165 177		203 215	
Tonality: G			(TT stacking) C/G	———— D/G	(Modulation)	A		A major			
Texture: Polyphony	Imitation	Homophony	Mixed	Homophony	Mixed	Canon - Homophony	- Canon - Homophony				
Musical Notes:											
Introduction:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Main dotted <i>Kaiyōmitemi</i> based rhythmic motif (“<i>yare yare</i>”) introduced on single pitch, G, which is passed around between S2-A2-S1-A1. This dotted rhythmic motif is present in the piece’s entirety. 2. Texture increases, peaks and then decreases before opening of Verse 1. 										
Verse 1:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The <i>hayashi</i> of “<i>yare yare</i>” opens the verse with the dotted rhythmic motif on the pitch G. 2. First phrase of text, melody is sung in repeated imitation between B1 and A1. 3. Second phrase of text, B1 and A1 sing melody together. 4. Refrain: First phrase in unison first between T1 and S1; second phrase in unison in A1 and S1 and then repeated in unison by T1 and B1. 5. The <i>hayashi</i> of “<i>yare yare</i>” closes the verse with the dotted rhythmic motif on the pitch G. 										
Interlude 1:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Tritone Stacking Figure (G-C-C#-F#) 2. Resolution to harmonized dotted rhythmic figure at interval of P5; alternating between <i>forte</i> and <i>piano</i> dynamic levels. 										
Verse 2:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Opening ascending <i>hayashi</i> of “<i>yare yare</i>” opens second verse. 2. First phrase of text, melody is in unison in S1 and S2. Dotted rhythmic motif in P4ths (G-C in Tenors, D-G in Basses). 3. Second phrase of text, melody is harmonized in a P5 interval between Altos and Sopranos. Dotted rhythmic motif in P5ths and Tritones with the use of F# in B1 above C in B2. 4. Refrain: Melody in octaves between Altos and Sopranos; <i>Hayashi</i> sung on perfect intervals (D-G) in Tenors and Basses. 5. The <i>hayashi</i> of “<i>yare yare</i>” closes the verse with the dotted rhythmic motif. First grouping is in imitative texture, second grouping is in homophonic texture. 										
Interlude 2:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A very short interlude transition that sets the “<i>yare yare</i>” <i>hayashi</i> at a tritone interval. Tempo slows slightly. 										
Verse 3:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. First phrase of text, melody is sung in the T1 and T2. Accompanying dotted rhythmic figures are present in Tritone pairings between S1/A1 and S2/A2 in a slow descent. Harmonically, this verse is less stable and is modulating. 2. Second phrase of text, melody is sung in octaves between Basses and Tenors. The Sopranos and Altos, still at Tritone pairings, begin a slow ascent. 3. Refrain: Melody is harmonized at a 6th interval in Tenors and Basses in first phrase grouping; Second phrase grouping begins a stepwise ascent at Tritone intervals in S1 and A1, melody is sung at 7th intervals. 										
Interlude 3:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Resolution to A tonal center. Sparse texture with static pitches A and E. 2. Thicker homophonic texture with more melodic motion harmonized in perfect intervals. 										
Verse 4:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Canon-like figure at descending 4th in S1/A1 and S2/A2 pairings. Tenors and Basses accompanying on antiphonal <i>hayashi</i> gestures. 2. Canon continues in same pairing at descending 2nd. 										
Interlude 4:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Glorious A major chord, antiphonal between SA and TB. 2. Homophonic texture with melodic contour. Open 5ths are filled in with 3rds giving stronger consonance to A major; <i>Accelerando</i>. 										
Verse 5:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. First Phrase in Canon (SSAA followed by TTBB); Body percussion imitating splashing water. 2. Second Phrase in Canon; Body percussion changes ordering to create new visual effects. 3. Canon ends as voices move to homophonic texture. 4. Refrain: Sopranos and Altos on refrain, Tenors and Basses on accompanying dotted rhythmic motif. 										
Coda:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sustained octave A in S1 and A1; modern harmonization of <i>hayashi</i> idea with chord substitutions, chromatic mediant, and borrowed chords. 2. Dominant acting g minor 7 chord. 3. Final A major chord. 										

Appendix D: IRB for Ko Matsushita Interview

The Treatment of Japanese Traditional Music in the Choral Works of Ko Matsushita

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

RESEARCH PROCEDURES

This research is being conducted to gain insight from Japanese choral composer Ko Matsushita on his compositional process and musical philosophy. The research is focused on Ko Matsushita's general musical background and his arrangements of Japanese folk songs. If you, Ko Matsushita, agree to participate, you will be asked to be in an audio recorded interview with the investigator, Bryan Stenson. From the audio recording an interview transcript will be produced. The transcript will provide content in the dissertation, and will most likely be quoted in the publication of the dissertation.

RISKS

There are no foreseeable risks for participating in this research.

BENEFITS

There are no benefits to you as a participant other than to further research in Matsushita's music. The production of a transcript for use in the publication of the study

CONFIDENTIALITY

The audio recording will remain confidential. The transcript produced from the recording will be used in the body of the dissertation. Your name, Ko Matsushita, will be attached to the contents of the interview. Anything you wish to omit from the interview will be noted and removed from the transcript.

PARTICIPATION

Your participation is voluntary, and you may withdraw from the study at any time and for any reason. If you decide not to participate or if you withdraw from the study, there is no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. There are no costs to you or any other party

ALTERNATIVES TO PARTICIPATION

If you wish not to be interviewed and recorded in person, an alternative is to conduct a written interview, in which the investigator, Bryan Stenson, sends you, Ko Matsushita, the interview questions and you, Ko Matsushita, respond with written answers.

CONTACT

This research is being conducted Bryan Stenson, School of Music at George Mason University. He/she may be reached at [REDACTED] for questions or to report a research-related problem. (If the investigator is a student, also include the faculty advisor's name and phone number). You may contact the George Mason University Institutional Review Board office at 703-993-4121 if you have questions or comments regarding your rights as a participant in the research.

CONSENT

I have read this form, all of my questions have been answered by the research staff, and I agree to participate in this study.

Ko Matsushita
Signature

23. Dec. 2019
Date of Signature

Appendix E: Interview Transcript

The following interview took place on December 23, 2019, in the café of the Keio Plaza Hotel in Hachioji, Tokyo. While Matsushita speaks English well, the interview was largely conducted in Japanese. The transcript below has been edited for brevity and relevance in addition to being translated to English by the author.

BS: How do you define your music? What do you think is unique to your music?

What are your characteristic traits?

KM: What are the strong points about my music? Style? You mean, especially in Japanese folksongs?

BS: Or it can be about anything of yours.

KM: Strengths? Speaking of strengths...Well, Japanese folk music has a specific style. Knowing as much as you can know about this, you can celebrate it. It is different from American and European folk music. It has a unique structure or shape. It is a structure only found in Japan. I apply these elements unique to Japanese folk music into a European style. I try to combine European style and Japanese style.

At the start, the compositions that were getting noticed were for piano, for example, Jazzy pieces or slightly pop-ish pieces. From 1994–1995, I studied abroad in Budapest, Hungary. I think my compositions then were also interesting. During that time outside of Japan, this “Island Country,” I saw that Japanese culture and music was very unique in its style. It is a treasure. I wondered how a Japanese style could be combined with European classical style. At first, I didn’t think it could, after all its Japanese. I did think, however, there should be a way to arrange Japanese [folk music.] Then at that

moment, I found myself extremely lucky to be in Hungary, the country of Bartók. Bartók had collected many Hungarian folksongs, and it helped him create his own unique style. Rather than composing in a traditional European style, he found ways to let the pentatonic nature of Hungarian folksongs live through his music. From there, I studied Bartók's style. Since Japan is also a pentatonic country, I could approach arranging Japanese folk music in a similar method. That is where I am good at. I think.

BS: Who or what are your influences as a composer?

KM: Bartók, Kodaly, other Hungarian composers. Some Japanese composers, such as Akira Miyoshi and Saburo Takata. Akira Miyoshi is my teacher of style. Saburo Takata is my teacher of sacred music.

BS: In your experience, how has the choral community in Japan promoted arrangements of Japanese folk music?

KM: In other words, in regard to Japanese folk music, pieces based in Japanese folk music are after all fun, there is more interest. It is very interesting. When I was... just came back from Budapest, it was... 1995 or 1996, I played "Tsugaru Jongara-bushi" by my arrangement, in the Japanese Tokyo choral competition. It had seven judges, and almost 5 judges, put not so low point, quite high point for us. But one adjudicator, he is a composer, and he likes the European style, and French music, Debussy, Poulenc, and so on. We sang "Tsugaru Jongara-bushi," right? — He hated Japanese music. Worst one. He put the worst points for us. I asked him, "Why did you put us at such low points?" "Why? Because you sang Japanese hate music." "Hate music? Please say again, which is a hate music?" That was about 25 years ago, Japanese choral world thinking was such thinking.

BS: So, most of the emphasis was placed in European music.

KM: European music was placed higher than Japanese music, and then a Japanese famous composer, Michio Mamiya, he wrote Japanese folk music for orchestra, for choral music, and so on. Many Japanese musicians didn't like him because he liked Japanese music, but I respected him. I was writing this kind of music, and the Japanese world started to change little by little. And now so many Japanese student choirs and adult choirs are choosing this kind of music.

BS: *Minyō* ?

KM: Yes, *minyō*.

BS: When I watch the recordings of the Concours competitions, it seems like everybody is singing pieces based on Japanese folk songs. So, this is more of a recent development, and it was not always this way in the past?

KM: Exactly. *Minyō* started to become the choice around 10-15 years ago.

BS: I see, so it is fairly recent.

KM: Yes, but that is why I am very happy. I'm very happy about it. Also, there has been an increase in *minyō* based pieces as well as composers.

BS: We touched on this already before, but how has your training in both Japan and Hungary affected your musical outlook? Earlier you mentioned Bartók and how he influenced your viewpoint on mixing folk songs with European classical music.

KM: Right. Yes, we did touch on this earlier. Main point, Americans are very diverse.

They come from various places and backgrounds: Asian, European, all sorts of European

heritages, Spanish, English, etc. There are a variety of cultures that you can interact with. This is very interesting. However, because Japan is an island nation and was isolated, although I can only see within Japan, a lot of wonderful traditions unique to Japan remained as they were. I would say that is a good thing. Roughly speaking in regard to culture, if one culture and a different culture live together, there is a gradual fading that occurs. It fades. However, since Japan is different, its characteristics remain. For example, Okinawan folk music.²⁷³

BS: How has the Japanese Choral World developed or emerged? We discussed this a bit earlier, but you said that it was around 10 years ago that Japanese *minyō* choral works began to flourish. Are there other developments in terms of genres and trends within Japanese choral music?

KM : I think the realm of Japanese choral music is in a great place because there are many ways to enjoy it. For example, within my own work, I have five pillars. One is *Minyō*. One is educational, such as Etudes or pieces written for the purpose of practice.

BS : I believe I read about this in a previous interview published through IFCM. You talked about Etudes, Sacred Music –

KM: Yes, yes! The same as that. If you look at that you see five. Also, Japanese composers tend to write a lot of choral pieces. I think that is a very good thing.

²⁷³ What he is referring to here is how Japan's geography and isolationist history made it difficult for cultures, domestic and international, to commingle and interact with each other. This isolation, while limiting in some ways, helped preserve the unique characteristics of localities within Japan. He uses Okinawa as an example of this.

BS: Why do you think that is? When I went to the US for college, there were a lot of composition majors, but for the most part, it seemed there was an emphasis on studying composition for instrumental works such as band and orchestra.

KM: It's the same in Japan. When I studied composition during college in Japan, choral music was not really taught. There was a lot of emphasis placed on things like orchestration and band arrangements. There were a lot of things like that. However, through my own desire to compose choral music, I studied choral composition on my own.

BS: In arranging for Japanese folk music, which factors should take precedent?

KM: Do you know the term “*sozai*?” The most important thing is to not overly break apart the subject matter's style. Carving out different lyrics, that type of thing should be avoided. Instead, I try having a bolder arrangement. For example, elements of Jazz are in there. While having that fun thing, it is important to be careful with it.

BS: The number one most important thing is to write in a way that preserves the character of *minyō*.

KM: When writing, yes.

BS: In your experience, what are some of the difficulties of getting Japanese composers published in the United States? For example, right now I live in the US.

Over there we have Hal Leonard and JW Pepper which seem to be popular publishers. However, Japanese music I feel is seldom published through them, but you can find a lot of choral music based in folk traditions from North America, Central and South America, Europe, and Africa. You will occasionally see a Japanese piece, but you don't see it all

that much. This doesn't only apply to Japanese folk arrangements, but also to Japanese composers. You, however, have seemed to have broken that barrier and have seen your pieces get published in Europe and be accessible in the States. Was the process easy for you, or was it difficult?

KM: Oh, yes. There were a few [Japanese composers] who were able to before me and after me, but really for a while it was just me. Yes, it was hard. For example, there is a big Japanese copyright association, known as JASRAC.²⁷⁴ When you make a recording through them it becomes their copyright, and therefore that author/composer becomes part of that company. From there you get paid for that copyright. So, when I first got published outside of Japan it was with a company called Sulasol from Finland. At that time, when I told JASRAC (Japanese Society for Rights of Authors, Composers, and Publishers) that a Finnish company wanted to publish my work, they said "no." When I asked why, JASRAC admitted they believed it would be impossible for me to get published through [Sulasol] since they were not part of JASRAC. Then I asked, "Is it illegal for me to get published there? Would it be a secession?" "No, it's not," they replied. "So, I can do it," I said, and then they responded, "I guess you can."

Also, there are not many composers here who are able to speak English, and even now with internet and email, many people don't necessarily feel comfortable emailing [in English] either. I think that might be one reason. One more thing is that this sort of activity is already crowded. In America, since I got to know the American choral

²⁷⁴ JASRAC is an Acronym for "Japanese Society for Rights of Authors, Composers, and Publishers."

community, there are conductors who are very close to each other, and I believe they would like to be introduced to people outside of that community, but there isn't necessarily that connection. Another way to put it is that American publishers wouldn't have an interest in countries like Japan. Lastly, another thing is that the Japanese language is very difficult, and they think, "this is for sure impossible."

BS: It is [difficult], isn't it? However, Americans are ok with Russian. They're ok with Czech. They're ok singing in a bunch of other languages, but yes, there is a perception that maybe Asian languages such as Japanese are more difficult. When it comes to singing, however, Japanese pronunciation isn't all that hard.

KM: I also think so. Because there are a lot of vowels. When there are a lot of consonants, it gets significantly harder. There aren't any slapped/hard mouths, "a, i, u, e, o."²⁷⁵ However, nuance, the nuance can be difficult. The same "a" right. Such as bright "a" and dark "a."

Also, one more thing is, two patterns. In my own pieces, for example, sacred music, this is something Japanese people don't understand. They don't understand what I'm writing. Nobody understands. Nobody. For that reason, I write sacred music for my own choral community's sake, or also for the European choral community and the American choral community's sake, where there is a lot of distribution, right? So there is music that Japan goes to and other people from other countries can meet it, but I don't know if it is crowded in the same way. So, one of my pieces... I wish you could hear it. It

²⁷⁵ Matsushita here demonstrated the five primary vowels spoken in Japanese. The are phonetically spelled to be pronounced as [a], [i], [u], [e], [o].

is not *minyō* but was written for the average middle school student level...I wrote for the NHK Concours compulsory piece, a piece called "*Shinjiru*." ("Believe").

BS: Oh! I know it!

KM: You know it?

BS: Yes, yes. I know it.

KM: "Believe." This piece, "Believe in." I performed it with a group in Hungary where I learned. We performed in Hungary, "*Shinjiru*." The Hungarian conductor there said, "Hmmm. This is kind of American Pop music." By calling it that "American Pop Music," he was saying it was stupid. But American Pop music is very favorable. To him, German classic is best, American pop music (gestures thumbs down) ...[in regards to the Hungarian conductor's comments]. I don't think so.

Then I was in Bulgaria, Sophia, and I took the interview for the national radio station. And I met one producer, and he was saying, "Oh! You must be Ko Matsushita! I love your music." "Really? You know me?" "Yes, of course," and she brought my CD. "I have your CD's, and your best track, *Shinjiru*." Even within the same Europeans, there is a difference of feelings about it.

BS: That Hungarian conductor seems to possess an older more traditional form of thinking. I think it happens in America as well. That music such as classical German choral works are placed high and fun music is...

KM: Low.

BS: There are those that think it is "low", but both children and adults want to sing fun music.

KM: Exactly.

BS: For the most part, choruses in America are made up of volunteers. There are a lot of people who do it solely for the joy of singing.

KM: But I think, say if I was in an American school, and I'm thinking of singing, for example, "Gloria Festival" or "Celebration Sanctus" which are very good pieces. Well, and for me, the "pop" feeling is good, but I think children probably go back and forth on it when they sing it. This is not a bad thing. Not only that, for example they might enjoy some composer personally over another or maybe rather than Bach, I think it is good to have a variety of music that people enjoy. And in that [variety of music], those Japanese songs [and composers] will get more performed in American or Europe, and if they become popular pieces, everyone will get to know [Japanese music] a little bit better.

However, I mentioned earlier, one of the people who I was influenced by is a composer named Akira Miyoshi. His personal style, his compositional style was French music. For that reason, I decided to program his music with my singers at an international choral competition in France, but when my singers sang, even though it was an incredibly good piece, they didn't receive much of a reaction. That sort of thing.

There are interesting things about that. Around 2007, I was asked from a choir in Latvia, "Kamer", "Youth Choir Kamer."

BS: Oh! "Jubilate Deo."

KM: Yes, yes!

BS: I sang it in college.

KM: Wow, really? Well, at the time I received that commission, I thought about writing in a Japanese style, Japanese traditional style. However, if I composed in that style, I thought, “Am I sure it will be accepted? I think there are other interesting things. Maybe that won’t be as interesting.” So, I decided to write in a European style, to take advantage of this and give myself a challenge. So, I purposely wrote without Japanese sounds, I wrote in European sounds. Since then, the piece has been sung by a wide variety of countries and that makes me happy.

BS: The next series of questions will for the most part from here. (in reference to the scores) Shall we view the scores together? You basically answered my next question in a previous response, about the things that are important to consider for Japanese folk music, so let’s skip that question.

BS: “Aizu Bandaisan” has two publications, with differences between the two versions. What are your reasons for making two versions of the same piece?

KM: This one, has eight people, right? This other one doesn’t. Why did I make this one? Wait a minute. Oh, right. This “Aizu Bandaisan,” this version here, I wrote from my friend Numamura-san, and this one I wrote first, for children’s voices.

BS: So, this version is for children’s voices?

KM: No, this one is.

BS: Oh, this one is for children, and this one is, around 1994?

KM: Yes, yes, the same year, but this one was after.

BS: Oh. This one is after. Yes, so this one came first. (In regard to version 2)

KM: Exactly.

BS: Is it correct to think of these two versions as the same piece?

KM: For the most part. Basically, same. This one is more complicated because we were using it for Bayern International Competition. The image right, is expansive.

BS: Yes, yes. I understand.

KM: The thing is, at the time, there was an Alto singer with an extremely low voice. That is why this note is here. (He points to the Alto 2 line of the octet) D. Low D. There was a woman in the choir who could sing this note. But now, middle school choirs are singing this version. (Pointing to version 2)

BS: Middle school? That's so low. Wow. So, one of my favorite things happens in this version. In the beginning there is like a "*pon pon pon.*" That idea made me think a bit about a shamisen.

KM: Ah, yes.

BS: It was that type of feeling/effect?

KM: Yes. Also, "Aizu Bandaisan" is, do you know the term *bon-odori*?

BS: Like during a *matsuri* (festival)?

KM: Yes, a *matsuri* (festival). The real version is quite fast.

BS: Oh, is that so?

KM: (He sings the tune at its typical tempo.) This would be done while dancing.

However, my arrangement is totally different. Aizu has very cold winters, and they get a lot of snowfall. Also, there are a lot of *sake* brewers in the region. *Sake* brewing takes place over the winter. Also, when making *sake*, it is a, how do you say, very labor intensive, it's heavy, so for that I decided to go in a different direction.

BS: Like a *waza-uta* (work song/labor song)?

KM: Yes, yes. A working song.

BS: I see.

KM: Also, when snow falls, the sound becomes quieter, right? It's quiet in the village. It becomes a quiet village during that time. They sing while carefully making each drop of *sake*, and the mountains are empty/open. It is surrounded by mountains, so the opening sung "*kon*" is meant to help visualize that. It's a beautifully kind setting, and with the "*pon*," I wanted that beauty to be very much felt.

BS: In "Tsugaru Jongara-bushi," you evoke the rhythmic style of the Jongara shamisen. What type of research or preparation did you have to do to capture it accurately?

KM: Well, this is, the *shamisen*, but the *shamisen* from Aomori prefecture is –

BS: Right. It is unique, correct?

KM: Yes. Like, "*dan dan radan*" (Singing *tsugaru-jamisen* rhythm)

BS: There's more rhythm and speed.

KM: Rhythmic but also very dynamic. This is all *shamisen* sounds. (Points to the score and imitates *tsugaru-jamisen* and sings the main opening theme of the piece.) I listened to this multiple times over and over again, and then wrote it down.

BS: (Pointing to Verse 2) The structure seems like ABA form.

KM: Oh right, here. (Pointing to Verse 2)

BS: In that Verse, the text is about a mountain, right? Well, I might be wrong, but here you are singing about a mountain, and then the key goes up.

KM: Yes, exactly.

BS: And then it [the key ascending] is like the mountain's [ascent.]

KM: Oh, because it has a modulation in it.

BS: Right, exactly. In English, I would describe that as “text painting” ... Because the words being sung are referring to a mountain, and it is as if the music is climbing the mountain due to the key having an ascending modulation.

KM: Yes, that makes sense. Even though this piece is a rhythmic piece, there is a very beautiful melody. I wanted to emphasize the beauty of that melody in this middle part.

BS: Many of your Japanese choral pieces share a common form. There is usually an A section with a contrasting B section followed by a returning A section. Both “Kotoba-asobi” and “Tsugaru Jongara-bushi” follow this pattern. How do you approach form when composing or arranging Japanese folk music?

KM: Really? ABA? (Chuckles a little bit.)

BS: Yes, ABA. For example, earlier we talked about the beauty of “Jongara-bushi's” melody, and in that B section, you wanted to highlight that beauty.

KM: I wouldn't say it's all ABA, but within that one piece, I wanted to create contrast.

BS: The next question pertains to one of my favorite pieces, “Kotoba-asobi Uta.” This one also has ABA form it seems. How did you end up picking these three children's songs?

KM: How did I come to choose these songs? (Asking himself rhetorically)

BS: And then, “Sōga-mura no Sonchōsan,” is typically done (I sing the tune in a regular duple meter to demonstrate how it is typically sung. KM joins in and sings along.)

BS: Right, exactly. It's even, right? But, in here, the 7/8 makes it feel more play-like.

KM: Yes, yes. This here, right here (He points to and sings the main motif of the piece.)

This here is my own composition, but this "Sōga-mura no Sonchō-san" is present all over Japan. Even I, as a little child sang this, but this was "Soda-mura."

BS: Ah, yes, yes. I know this.

KM: This here, Sōga-mura, was an actual place in Wakayama. It's true. It was there. It existed. In a place called Hidaka-machi. It really existed. So, this, "*Soda-mura no sonchō-san*," the word "*Soda*" I didn't find very interesting. However, Sōga-mura was actually there, so "Sōga-mura no Sonchō-san," this word play is very interesting –

BS: Right. Like, "**Soda**-mura no Sonchō-san ga **soda**." (I was placing emphasis on the syllable "da" to demonstrate how redundant it can feel when sung in the original text.)

The word "soda" has already been used before.

KM: There isn't going to be an actual Soda-mura (Soda Village), right? It's that. "Negoro no Jūjaike" also refers to a real place in Wakayama. And then with "Bero Bero no Kamisama," I thought that the [vocal] "*bero bero*" was interesting.

BS: I do, too. It's funny!

KM: (Singing) "*Bero-bero no Kamisama wa...*" So, when you ask "why did I pick these three?" I'm not sure of the reason why, but it is apparently in ABA, ABC maybe, AB (Pauses to look at the score for a second). In either case the rhythmic pattern is closer to an ABA feeling.

So, in the *Nihon Warabeuta Zenshu* (Collection of Japanese Children's Songs) there are 20 something books (volumes). And it contains *Warabe-uta* (Children's Songs)

starting from Hokkaido and going through all the prefectures. From that, I thought “What would young children see in here that would be interesting to them?” So that’s how I searched.

BS: And then, this motivic idea. (I proceed to sing the original motif of the song). That is a melody that you composed yourself, correct?

KM: Correct.

BS: When I listen to it, I feel that this melodic pattern (motif) connects these three *warabe-uta* well. I find this piece to be a lot of fun.

KM: The thing is, the three pieces are completely different, but there is a feeling of completeness and unification.

BS: Yes. Everything seems like it's related.

KM: Related, yes. When thinking about proportion and form. Oh, this piece...When I go to Europe, everyone is singing it. There was this one time I went to Basque Country, where a choir was singing it. When I said “*bero bero*,” it turned out to be also be a Basque term, “*bero bero*,” they have it as a funny word.²⁷⁶ So, everyone went, “Woah!” and had a big laugh.

BS: Oh no! That’s interesting. So “*Bero Bero no Kamisama*” is a *kami* of *sake* and drinking, right? For being drunk.

KM: Really, are you sure? “*Bero bero*” is drunk?

²⁷⁶ "Bero" in Basque translates to "Hot." "Burubero" means "hot head," according to Francis J. Carmody in his article, “Basque Place Names in Spain” in *Hispanofilia*, no. 78 (1983): 53–60.

BS: Well, that is what I thought. Also, at the end, the final “*bero bero*” section, “*be~ro, be~ro*” (I’m singing the example from the score.) That was a moment where I thought it had a “Oh! Too much was drunk!” kind of feeling.

KM: Oh. (Laughs at my interpretation.) It makes me happy that people from America find this piece interesting. This piece would be great if American publishers could publish it.

BS: Absolutely! This is one of the reasons why I’m writing about this topic for my dissertation. I would love for Japanese pieces to be more accessible in the United States.

KM: Yes. Also, this, it is very difficult to get to American people because Japanese... (Matsushita holds up the published book that contains “Kotoba-asobi uta.”)

BS: It’s always in books, right?

KM: Yes, it’s in books.

BS: Right. They don’t publish single pieces.

KM: It should be published by piece. For real. Why is this, why? Because of Japanese music shops. They like to line up [books] like this. (KM holds the book vertically showing me the spine of the book.) Because people look here. If this isn’t here, it won’t sell. Japanese people like school books to be neat.

So, we went to the ACDA convention, and we went to tour with the publishers, and the American publishers are selling one piece [single pieces]. One dollar. Only one dollar. And standing at the end of our booth for the Japanese publisher, very expensive. (What he is saying here is that at the Japanese publisher’s booth at the ACDA convention he attended, the prices of the Japanese publications were expensive in comparison to the

other music publishers at the conference.) No, no way. It's too expensive and in Japanese. Nobody would buy. How much is it? Ah, 1000 yen.

BS: Oh 10 dollars!

KM: No. Yeah. 1,500 yen. 15 dollars. "15 dollars!?" (He was impersonating someone who asked him how much a publication she was interested in costs.)

BS: If it was just one [piece], it would be more affordable.

KM: I agree. It would be good. "I want to do this piece. Can I please get just this piece? Why do I have to pay more money for all of the pieces when I only want to do the one?"... Japanese publishers don't know the world. And they don't want to know as well. They are domestically minded. Also, only my pieces have alphabetic letters, but other composers, no alphabet. So, nobody can read it.²⁷⁷

BS: Your arrangement of Kaigara-bushi incorporates techniques such as the opening soundscape, harmonic instability, word painting, and use of rhythmic motifs. What inspired you to arrange this familiar folk tune in an experimental way? You really create the image of the sea. What would you say is the inspiration behind this soundscape idea? The ocean?

KM: Yes, yes. The ocean. This piece, rather this series has three pieces. The three pieces are from the same prefecture, Tottori-*ken* (prefecture). Yes, Tottori-*ken*. So there, the Tottori University Mixed Choir was singing as the first performance, as premier performance. And they requested me for two or three folk music from Tottori Prefecture.

²⁷⁷ He is speaking in regard to the published text in his pieces having Romanized letters along with the Japanese letters. This is known in Japan as *romaji*.

“Please, arrangement. Please arrange.” And they send me the sound clip of several folk music from Tottori, but [they were] quite ordinary. Nothing special. So, I was a bit worried, but this “*Yukamuri-uta*” song, this was interesting. “The song of the Spa.”

BS: Like *onsen* (hot springs)?

KM: (Nodding his head.) This, what the song is about, the hot springs of Tottori prefecture are very extremely hot. About 44–45 degrees.²⁷⁸

MS: Degrees Celsius. O my gosh.

KM: So, it's too hot. Because of that, naturally it needs to be swished and stirred to make it a little cooler. To cool it down. So, with this stick, like this they – (he gestures a stirring paddling motion.) This is the “*yare yare yare yare*.”

BS: Oh!

KM: This is very good, very interesting. “*Kaigara-bushi*” is so called, very normal, too normal for Japanese sound. And not so artistic, “but please.” (In regard to him being commissioned to write an arrangement of “*Kaigara-bushi*”)

BS: It is a very famous song.

KM: I guess it could be seen as famous. You can just find it anywhere.

BS: Yes, yes. Isn't this a *Bon-odori* song?

KM: Yes, exactly. Yes, but this “*kawaiyano, kawaiyano*” is a little interesting. So, I could use that. At that time, I remember thinking, this may be a bit hard if you don't know this in Japanese, there is a fish called *iwashi*. *Iwashi*.

²⁷⁸ Temperature in Celsius.

BS: Oh yes. Sardines.

KM: *Iwashi* is said to be a *zako* (small fish), you can get them anywhere. They're a cheap fish. So, what I said was, *Iwashi*, when I was asked to arrange "*Kaigara-bushi*," this "*Kaigara-bushi*" song is like an *Iwashi*. With this *Iwashi*, I would have to make it into a high-quality dish. That's what I thought.

BS: So, you didn't like this song so much.

KM: At the beginning, I didn't like it.

BS: Did you think of it as a chore? Like it is *mendokusai* (tedious).

KM: Yes, *mendokusai*. However, once after I started, it became more interesting.

BS: Oh, okay. I have heard other arrangements of "*Kaigara-bushi*," but this creation of an opening sound image of a seascape is only in yours. Your arrangement. However, if you like this piece (referring to "*Yukamuli Uta*"), I can include this one in my dissertation.

KM: Ah yes, please do include this one. This one is really fascinating. "*Kaigara-bushi*" is a coastal folk song. *Umi-ben*, seaside.

BS: Yes, of course.

KM: And, seaside, folk song from the seaside area, and this "*Taue-uta*," is called, well –

BS: Oh, like for farming?

KM: Yes, yes, yes. *Suiden* (Paddy field). *Ta-ue* (Rice Planting). So that is not by the sea, *umi*, but is more inland. Inside of Tottori prefecture. So, because of that, the rhythmic pattern is totally different.

BS: Oh?

KM: (Sings “Kaigara Bushi” rhythm and then sings “Taue-uta” rhythm) This holds more of a fixed event. So, it is ok for it not to be in 4/4 time.

BS: Oh, so more free.

KM: Yes, free. Because, when an elderly person plants rice it’s (sings Taue-uta slowly and freely while gesturing rice planting). If it was now, rice planting is automatic.

Because it used to be handmade, if the person planting was younger, “Taue-uta” would become faster in tempo. If it was an old man, it would slow down. I find that [aspect] interesting.

Lastly, this “Yukamuli-uta” is from an area called *Iwai-onsen* in Tottori prefecture. (KM searches on his phone for a map of the area to show me the geography of Tottori.) This is a map of Tottori prefecture. This is a map of Japan. Tottori prefecture is right here. This is Tottori station and Tottori city... and this area here is inland, see? This is close to the mountains. By the mountains.

BS: Oh, I see. So, it’s like from the sea –

KM: To the mountains.

BS: So, this set is: The Sea, The Fields, and gradually going in –

KM: Yes, exactly. The sea. Even though the mountains are rather rugged [in terrain], what is interesting is this rhythm. (Sings a dotted eighth to sixteenth rhythm which is the main rhythmic motif of “Yukamuli-Uta.”) Right? So, this (he sings the rhythm again) is a rhythm associated with the sea. For example, do you know “Sado Okesa?” (He starts to sing Sado-Okesa). Sado is an island off of Niigata.

BS: Oh yes, I do know that. Yes, Sado Island.

KM: Yes, Sado Island. So, since it is an island, it is completely surrounded by ocean.

Places affiliated with the ocean/sea have this rhythm (sings dotted rhythm). It's the *Umi* (Sea) rhythm. So why would this be in the mountains if it has "Sea rhythms"? What do you think? It is because of the *onsen* (hot springs). Because of the water.

BS: Oh because of the water! Of course.

KM: That (sings the dotted "Sea rhythm") is interesting, right?

BS: Right.

KM: Because the "Sea rhythm" is in the mountains. It is just so fascinating. (He sings "yare yare yare" from "Yukamuli-uta".)

BS: I agree. This is really entertaining.

KM: Exactly! So, with this [rhythm], Okinawa is also the "Sea [rhythm]". It's surrounded by the sea since it's an island. So, with that in mind, "*Haiya haiya haiya haiya, ha, ha, ha, ha*" (sings a typical Okinawan folk rhythm). This is the Sea.

And then, for example, there's a song called "Yagi-bushi." It is a song from the borders of Saitama Prefecture, Tochigi Prefecture, and Gunma Prefecture, it goes (sings a rhythm of an eighth note followed by two sixteenth notes). This is, do you understand the term *heiya*? Plain.²⁷⁹ The "Plain rhythm." So now going to the mountains, for example... (He was searching for a good example to use in the stack of scores I brought him. He finds what he is looking for in the blue book with a piece called, "Kariboushi Kiri-uta.") This, oh wait not this, but this, here. This is the mountain side. So, if you look at this,

²⁷⁹ The term "plain" here refers to the geographical feature.

(sings excerpt from “Kariboushi Kiri-uta”). This takes enormous strength. It makes you think the effects of higher altitudes. In this, they are climbing up mountains while carrying and pulling big items. “*Kono~ yama~*” (“*This~ mountain~*”) (KM demonstrating a mountain song in a more traditional style while emphasizing the strain involved in climbing the mountain.)

BS: Oh, like it is strenuous.

KM: Yes, yes. (He sings a rhythm of a sixteenth followed by a dotted eighth tied to a quarter) It is completely different than the “Sea rhythm” from before. (He sings the “Sea rhythm.”) This is the Sea. (He sings the “Mountain rhythm.”) That is the Mountain. So because *Iwai Onsen* (Iwai Hotsprings) are in the mountains it should be (he sings the “Mountain rhythm”), right? But, it’s (sings “Sea rhythm”), although it is not because of the Sea, but rather because of the water. Because of the bath.

BS: That is so fascinating.

KM: So, this Mountain rhythm is called *Mago-uta Yōshiki* (*Mago-uta Style*). How about I write it down for you?

BS: Yes, please. (KM writes down the term in my notebook)

KM: There is *Oiwake* style. And then, there is this, Mountain. If this becomes the Plains, it’s called “*Yagi-bushi Yōshiki*” (*Yagi-bushi Style*). Finally, with seaside, well there isn’t really a name for it, but I call it “*Kaiyōminteki*” (“Ocean Folk style”) rhythm.

“*Kaiyōmin*” are people who live by the sea or on the sea, for example, fishermen. Those groups of people sing with this rhythm, (sings the dotted ocean rhythmic figure).

BS: Oh, that makes sense.

KM: Yes, it is like, being on the waves (sings *Kaiyōminteki* styled rhythms). And the mountain, climb the mountain (sings *Oiwake* styled rhythms). It is has no time. 4/4 time, 3/4 time, none of that.

BS: It has no meter.

KM: Yes, yes, exactly. There is no meter. However, choral music with no meter gets difficult to write, although I wrote it, but it should be very free. Flexible.

BS: So, for example, in this spot, (pointing in the score) 3/4 to 4/4 and 6/4, this is free and not so strict.

KM: Inside here.

BS: Yes, yes.

KM: Yes. Exactly. An image of that. And then also, this “Yagi-bushi.” It’s in this. This three-piece set. This is “Yagi-bushi.” It is from the Kanto Plains district. It is flat. (He sings a *Yagibushi* styled rhythmic idea). This is a horse’s (gestures a galloping motion.)

BS: Ah, oh. Riding a horse.

KM: Yes, the rhythm of riding a horse. This “*Yagi-bushi*” is in a very traditional Japanese *minyō* structure, an orthodox structure. This one is iconic so please listen to it if you would.

There was some more conversation after this, but it didn’t pertain to the topics covered in the interview. I thanked him for his generosity and time, and we discussed the possibility of a follow-up interview during my next planned trip to Japan, which would have been for the 2020 Olympics in Tokyo. That trip, unfortunately, did not happen due to the Covid-19 pandemic. I am still grateful, however, for the correspondence that we were

able to achieve and plan on more conversations with Matsushita to further my research beyond this dissertation.

Appendix F: Permissions

All musical excerpts used in the document received permission to be used in the dissertation by European American Music Distribution Company. The permissions for each piece are listed below.

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Bryan Hiroto Stenson graduated from St. Mary's International School in Tokyo, Japan in 2007. He received his Bachelor of Music in Vocal Performance from Pacific Lutheran University in Tacoma, WA in 2011 and received his Master of Music in Choral Conducting from Butler University in 2014. He was employed as a choir teacher in Arlington County, VA before winning an audition to sing as a Tenor Vocalist with U.S. Army Voices in the U.S. Army Band "Pershing's Own." He has also served as the Artistic Director for the Chamber Chorale of Fredericksburg from 2016-2020 and as the director of Bel Canto Chorus with the Children's Chorus of Washington from 2014-2016. Having served 6 years in the U.S. Army Band, he currently resides in Denton, TX with his wife and is the Associate Director of Music for Children and Youth at Christ United Methodist Church in Plano.