

CHILDREN'S BOOK REVIEW

Reviewed by Karen Williams

Moon

Musicmap Series: Multicultural Song 2
Concept Development by Hyun Kyung Youm, PhD
Illustrated by Jung Han Kim, MFA
Music Recorded by Seoul Philharmonic Orchestra
Seoul, Korea: Koomzaal Company, Ltd., 2007

A child exclaims, “Moon, moon, I see you,” to the ever-present moon in this bilingual rendition of a Korean folk song. In Hyun Kyung Youm’s book, *Moon*, the child continues amiably talking to the moon on each succeeding page. The words describe the moon as a white plate, a mirror, or daylight in the night, as it illuminates the mountain, the child’s hometown, and the child’s family. Beneath each illustration the words are notated in English and Korean.

The swirly, finger-paint-like impressionistic illustrations add a dreamy, nighttime quality to the words. Sometimes the moon is a large, bright, white ball, sometimes a small, hazy, yellow circle. These illustrations could easily inspire children to create their own artwork to accompany the words or extend the song by writing and illustrating their original verses.

The book includes a CD featuring good vocal models. First is a child’s voice singing in English and then in Korean. The melody is played on a trumpet followed by the Seoul Philharmonic Orchestra playing the reprise. Because the tempo of the recording is too quick to use while sharing the book with children, singing the song without the recording allows for a more comfortable pace to turn the pages and savor the illustrations. Standard music notation of the song is found in the back of the book along with the words in

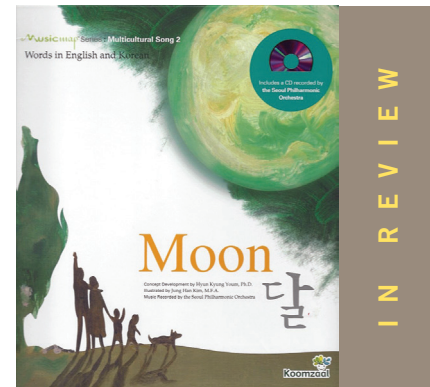
English and Korean, as well as a phonetic pronunciation of the Korean words.

Musically, the song is diatonic in *a-b-a-c* (or *question-answer*) form. The melodic pattern for the “a” section—do mi so-so mi—can be used as the question for an improvised four-beat answer. The song may be played on the recorder if the melody is transposed into the key of G. The simple quarter note and eighth note rhythms are suitable for creating ostinati to add to the song.

When spoken expressively as a poem, *Moon* provides opportunities for creative movement. Varied images in the illustrations suggest diverse ways of moving. The moon “like a mirror in the sky” easily leads to mirrored movement. The busy colors of the active town scene contrast with the muted glow of the hazy moon above the quiet seaside. Children will delight in the fun and fancy of creating movements to express the contrasts of light and dark, stillness and motion, or high and low. A hand drum to represent the moon visually may be a tangible catalyst for creativity. Using paper shapes of other lunar phases such as a half moon or a crescent moon, creates more possibilities. Improvised background music or unpitched percussion to accompany each musical phrase can add to the effect.

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At the end of the book, the melody is represented in iconic notation with large (quarter note) and small (eighth note) moons rising and falling with the melodic contour of the song. Children will be inspired to explore the shape of the melody visually and spatially by physically creating large and small circles or spheres with their bodies. Paper plates, hand drums, small



paper circles, marbles, or balls can serve as manipulatives for individual or small group representation of the melodic contour. These activities could also be used with other moon-related songs such as *Deta, Deta* from Japan or *I See the Moon*, eventually transferring the pitch patterns to standard notation on the staff.

The use of *Moon* may also be extended with other music, folk tales, or poems about the cosmos. Listening and moving to classical pieces such as Beethoven's *Moonlight Sonata* or Debussy's *Clair de Lune* can be used as part of a larger lunar theme.

To reinforce the cultural connection, incorporate traditional Korean materials such as the folktale, *The Sun and the Moon*, which is readily available online. Videos of authentic Korean dances such as *Samgo-Mu* (drum dance) or *Buchaechum* (fan dance) showcase traditional Korean dress and instruments and can be a starting place for movement ideas.

Moon provides many ways to explore musical ideas with a Korean folksong. Expanding our

teaching beyond the traditional American folk song repertoire to include non-English songs that authentically represent our students' cultural heritage benefits the children of our multiethnic, multicultural society. Similar books in the Koomzaal Music Map series that may be worth exploring include folk songs from France, the United States, Germany, England, Spain/Latin America, Japan, Indonesia, Greece, and Africa. ■

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