



Letter from Sado by Jodie Blackshaw

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FOLDER 1: LESSON PLAN FOR REHEARSING

1. Introduction to *Letter from Sado* Warm-Up
 - Warm-Up Sheet Music
2. Construct Taiko Tire Drums
3. Two Lessons: Hearing the “Wild Sea!” and “Still, Starry Night”: Preparing for Sections A and K in *Letter From Sado*
4. Perform & Listen in Color Groups
5. Recognize, Define & Locate the Musical Elements in *Letter from Sado*

FOLDER 2: LESSON PLANS FOR LISTENING & RESPONDING

1. Using a Listening Map to Follow the Music

FOLDER 3: LESSON PLAN FOR CREATING MUSIC

Note: due to the creative aspects of *Letter from Sado*, rehearsal lessons “Hearing the “Wild Sea!” and “Still, Starry Night”: Preparing for Sections A and K in *Letter from Sado*” may also be considered music creation lessons.

1. Improvise Music Based on a Haiku

FOLDER 4: LESSON PLANS WITH INTERDISCIPLINARY CONNECTIONS

1. Introduction to Interdisciplinary Lessons
2. Mini-Lessons:
 - Meet Composer Jodie Blackshaw
 - Sado Island
 - What are Taiko Drums?
 - Who was Matsuo Bashō?
 - The Poem that Inspired the Music
3. Haiku History, Form, & Creation
4. Write Your Own Program Notes

STUDENT MATERIALS

Featured readings and worksheets designed to be printed and shared with students can be found throughout this curriculum. They are easily identifiable - each page has a border and contains an image of Rondo, the BandQuest® mascot!



Teacher's Guide

INTRODUCTION & OVERVIEW

BandQuest® was conceived and launched by the American Composers Forum to create new music for middle level bands. In addition to recent commissions by some of today's leading composers, *BandQuest* also provides a rich curriculum with multiple resources for ensembles and music classrooms. The main goals of the *BandQuest* curriculum are to provide music educators with:



- Tools to create ensemble lessons that teach students how to perform the piece
- Resources to support interdisciplinary connections to other learning areas

We believe that when band students make connections between the music they play and other disciplines, and approach the piece through multiple entry points, they develop multi-layered critical thinking skills.

The materials were developed using a curriculum framework called the Facets Model (Barrett, McCoy, & Veblen, 1997). The Facets Model is a comprehensive approach for studying musical works in depth, one that helps students relate music to other disciplines in meaningful ways. The model has been used to create curricula in many settings, but especially in designing the content of the *BandQuest* curricula.

Eight essential questions make up the basic facets model. The questions are grouped into categories which encourage teachers and students to address fundamental ideas about the origins of the work, its elements and form, and the range of expressive meanings it conveys. For in-depth information on the facets model, go the *BandQuest* website at www.BandQuest.org.

The materials for each *BandQuest* curriculum can be downloaded. The curriculum includes:

- A Teacher's Guide
- Composer Biography and Program Notes
- Lesson plans for Rehearsing the Music
- Lesson Plans for Guided Listening and Responding
- Lesson Plans for Creating Music
- Lesson Plans with an Interdisciplinary Focus
- Readings for Students
- Assessment Strategies
- Links to other web based resources

LETTER FROM SADO

Jodie Blackshaw writes music that empowers students to take ownership of their music by making musical decisions that are often left only to the composer and conductor. In *Letter from Sado* this takes the form of opening and closing sections in which students become the decision makers, determining how they will play. *Letter from Sado* was commissioned by *BandQuest*® for the Rosemount, Minnesota 8th Grade Bands, John Zschunke and Jeff Rinear, conductors. It was premiered at Rosemount High School on May 19, 2014.

LETTER FROM SADO MUSICAL ELEMENT ANALYSIS

An analysis of the musical elements contained in *Charm* is provided on the following pages, along with a definition and an indication of measures that contain each element. If measure numbers for an element are not cited for an instrument, then the element does not occur in that instrument's part.

MELODY/MOTIVE

Pitch set

The collection of pitches used for the melodic and harmonic construction of the piece

Although *LetterFrom Sado* is not a traditionally tonal piece, the pitch set that occurs in the motives is the same as a G natural minor scale.



Permutations of Motives

Various permutations of motives occur throughout the piece. The example below is a motive from the Yellow Team part at letter A that is performed in free rhythm that appears again later at letter B performed with a specific rhythm at a specific tempo. This example represents one of the main motives in the piece.

A Wild sea!
1. FREE TIME: A wild, stormy sea, play at different times

B A lone traveler, looking out to the Isle of Sado ♩=72

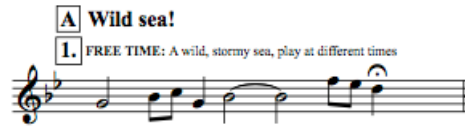
The image shows two musical staves. The first staff, labeled 'A Wild sea!', is in G natural minor and shows a melodic line with a fermata on the final note. Above it is a box containing '1. FREE TIME: A wild, stormy sea, play at different times'. The second staff, labeled 'B A lone traveler, looking out to the Isle of Sado ♩=72', is also in G natural minor and shows a similar melodic line. Above it is a box containing 'Solo' and 'p' (piano) and 'mp' (mezzo-piano) dynamics. The tempo marking '♩=72' is also present.

Teaching strategy: Have the band members find either entire motives or fragments of motives that occur in more than one place in their parts.

Main motive

Letter D in Yellow Team Part

One of the main motives occurs in the Yellow Team part at letter D.



Teaching strategy: Chant “Stormy Sea stretching over Sado” to the rhythm of the main motive (Letter B in *Letter From Sado* Warm-Up) to help stabilize the thinner rhythmic structure at Letter D in the piece. When chanting, set metronome speed at quarter note = 96. After everyone chants, alternating sections of the band chanting while other sections of the band play Letter B in the Warm-Up.

RHYTHM

Syncopation

Placing stress or emphasis on what is normally a weaker part of the beat

First appears in Yellow Team part at Letter G and then in other parts at Letters H and I.



Free Rhythm

The speed and duration of notes are determined by the individual performer.

At Letter A and Letter K, band members perform the notation independently at a speed of their choosing. An excerpt from the Red Team alto saxophone part is provided below as an example.



INSTRUMENTATION

Color Wheel Teams

Rather than scoring in more traditional groupings of woodwind and brass choirs, with instruments fulfilling more traditional functions, in *Letter From Sado* the band is divided into nine “Color Teams,” which serve as smaller independent ensembles within the larger group. The band set-up for performances should be adjusted to accommodate the organization of the “Color Teams.”

TEAM YELLOW: Flute (1st); Oboe, Clarinet (1st)

TEAM ORANGE: Flute (2nd); Clarinet (2nd); Alto Saxophone (1st)

TEAM RED: Alto Saxophone (2nd); Trumpet (1st)

TEAM PURPLE: Trumpet (2nd); Horn in F

TEAM TEAL: Clarinet (3rd) *optional*, Tenor Saxophone, Bassoon, Trombone (1st)

TEAM BLUE: Trombone (2nd); Baritone (1st)

TEAM GREEN: Bass reeds, Baritone (2nd); Tuba

TEAM WHITE: Melodic & Non-melodic Percussion (all metals)

TEAM BLACK: Medium and Low Toms or homemade Taiko Tire drums

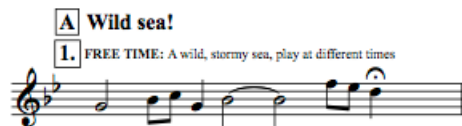
ALEATORIC TECHNIQUES

In aleatoric music, some of the musical elements are left to chance or are determined by the individual performer.

Soundscapes – In free time and representing visual imagery

Letter A; Wild Sea! And Letter K: Heaven’s River

Each Color Team is given a melodic line that they are instructed to play in free time in ways that represent visual images that are provided to the students. An example of a part from the Yellow Team part is represented below.



Soundscape: Graphic Notation and Vocalization of Sounds

Between Letter J and K

Band members create a soundscape inspired by the misty mountain peaks of Sado Island by saying the word “shimmer” repeatedly, using the graphic to guide expression (e.g. when black emphasizes “sh”, when white emphasizes “mm”). Then Color Teams decide how team they will express the word in between.”

This instruction may seem incomplete, but as with everything in *Letter from Sado*, it is up to the performers to interpret. There is no ‘wrong way’!

FREE TIME: As directed

SOUNDSCAPE: Create a soundscape inspired by the misty mountain peaks of Sado Island.

Say the word “Shimmer” repeatedly - use the graphic to guide your expression
(eg. when black emphasise “sh”, when white, emphasize “mm” then decide how your team will express the word in-between).



FORM

For an overview of the form, please refer to the [Listening Map](#).

EXPRESSION/INTERPRETATION

Free Improvisation

Rather than interpreting traditional musical symbols and notation, the aleatoric sections of the piece require that band members respond to visual and textual prompts. The performers contemplate their individual reactions to the prompts and then share with members of their Color Teams to create a team interpretation of the prompts. Directors should observe the designated markings but allow the group to explore the expression of the piece through their own interpretation.

Lyrical Style

The sections of the piece that are performed with a specified meter and tempo are intended to be played in a smooth, connected lyrical style, indicated with slur and tenuto markings.



BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

COMPOSER BIOGRAPHY: JODIE BLACKSHAW

Composer, music educator, and band director Jodie Blackshaw was born and raised in the Riverina area of New South Wales, Australia. Blackshaw characterizes this agricultural region as a “beautiful place to grow and change,” a place that allowed her a “great deal of freedom and exploration.” Though music was not prominent in her early years, her town of Griffith had a youth band. Her parents supported her decision to join; this is where she learned to play the clarinet. Community band membership led to music camp and regional school ensembles, forming the foundation of her future musical life.

Blackshaw received a Bachelor of Music degree in Composition from the Canberra School of Music in 1992. She taught music in many diverse settings, from the rural Australian outback to inner-city Sydney, working with students of all ages and conducting a variety of concert bands. In these settings, Blackshaw often created and arranged music for her ensembles because she was not able to find pieces that addressed the diverse skills of the players and the unique instrumentation of her groups.

Through these years of teaching, conducting and composing, Blackshaw vigorously searched for new approaches that would work with her young bands, approaches to music learning that focused on additional elements and aspects of music learning beyond melody and harmony. She returned to school and completed a Graduate Diploma in Education in 2001. It was in graduate school that Blackshaw



Jodie Blackshaw

learned about Orff-Schulwerk, a music education methodology pioneered by the composer Carl Orff, Gunild Keetman, and Howard Gardner’s Theory of Multiple Intelligences. Orff and Keetman’s approach to building musicianship in all learners called for the integration of music, movement, speech, and drama. Both Orff-Schulwerk and the Theory of Multiple Intelligences aligned well with Blackshaw’s philosophy and became significant features of her music, her work with students, and her “student-first” approach in creating innovative works for symphonic bands at all levels.

In 2005, her Grade 1 piece, *Whirlwind*, was the First Prize Winner of the Frank Ticheli Composition Contest. In 2009, she worked with the University of North Texas Symphonic Band on the world premiere of her emotionally engaging work, *Soulström*. She is fanatical about producing high quality, meaningful works for band and appears as a guest clinician and adjudicator for band festivals throughout Australia. Blackshaw has a deep desire that her music, “Be not just another piece, but an educational and spiritual journey, for players and director alike.”

Through 2009-2012 Blackshaw developed an original concept for beginning band repertoire known as the ‘Project Piece’. In early 2012 the Australian Band and Orchestra Director’s Association, Queensland,



Australian States & Territories

commissioned Blackshaw to write two works for the Australian National Band and Orchestra Conference. Due to the short lead-time, she agreed to a post-commission of her freshly completed, foundational 'Project Piece' entitled *Belah Sun Woman. Twist*, a work for high school band was also completed and both were premiered at the conference.

In December 2012 Jodie presented the clinic 'Get off the Podium' alongside Dr. Mark Fonder of Ithaca College and esteemed conductor Professor Craig Kirchhoff at the Midwest Clinic in Chicago, Illinois.

Here is what Jodie says about her music:

"It was during educational studies that the question was posed 'As a teacher, what do you want to achieve?' For some time I did not know the answer, but after a while it became apparent. Upon reflection I realized (sic) that I was sincerely concerned about my students, about their welfare, about their personal growth and the pathways they chose. So I decided that as a teacher, my ultimate goal was to foster self-esteem and love of self through music. Now that I am a full-time composer, I achieve this in my music by offering students the opportunity to make decisions and be creative with the material. This experience enables the players to take ownership of the piece they are learning to play. This simple idea is incredibly under-utilised (sic) in educational wind band literature yet it offers students and the Conductor an opportunity to grow and change in ways they had perhaps not thought possible, at any stage of learning."

Visit Jodie Blackshaw's website: www.jodieblackshaw.com/



Teaching clarinet in Yass, New South Wales (pop. 7,000) in 2008

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

PROGRAM NOTES FOR *LETTER FROM SADO*

By Jodie Blackshaw

Letter from Sado is a creative piece for young band that was inspired by the following Haiku poem by Matsuo Bashō (translation by David Landis Barnhill).

Stormy sea:
Stretching over Sado,
Heaven's River*

Sado refers to Sado Island; "Heaven's River" is a Japanese phrase referring to the Milky Way.

In researching this piece, it became intriguing that in the translation of Haiku poetry, there could be many alternate variations and interpretations of the literal translation from the Japanese to the English language. I was also inspired by the depth of Haiku poetry, i.e., you can read the poem at various levels and the more you understood the framework of this delicate art form, the more revealing it became. The parallels to music were very clear to me.

Sado Island, located off the West coast of Japan's Northern Island, is a very intriguing place. The island is home to rare and beautiful forests, unusual topography, misty mountain ranges, curious rock formations, and a long flat plain right through the its middle. Historically, Sado was a place where gold was mined and to which various artists, and religious and military leaders were exiled. It was often said that people 'found themselves' during their solitary confinement on Sado Island. Today it is a culturally rich island with two famous Taiko drumming groups.

To capture the idea of interpretation and the concept of "reading between the lines," the students are invited to become decision makers about particular sections of the music. For example, the opening and closing sections of the piece use the same material, which is a selection of repeated melodic figures. The students themselves decide how to play these figures, first as individuals, then in small teams, and finally as a whole band. Their decisions include ideas regarding tempo (how fast?), dynamics (how loud?), and articulation (smooth, short, or hard?). The Haiku by Matsuo Bashō is used to inspire them; for example, the opening

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section invites students to play the material as if it were the “stormy, wild sea” and the closing section asks students to play the same melodic figure, but to now draw inspiration from “Heaven’s River,” the Milky Way.

In-between there is an elaborate, heavily textured section that becomes increasingly powerful. The music doesn’t rest harmonically until the whole band plays in unison. These multiple layers of sound represent the many thoughts and ideas that would have surrounded the individuals sent into exile on Sado Island, while the final unison is representative of their own breakthrough experience sending them on a pathway to inner peace and acceptance.

Letter from Sado was commissioned by *BandQuest*® for the Rosemount, Minnesota 8th Grade Bands, John Zschunke and Jeff Rinear, conductors. It was premiered at Rosemount Middle School on May 19, 2014.

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BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

LETTER FROM SADO LISTENING MAP

O P E N I N G M I D D L E S E C T I O N C L O S E	Timings	Musical Events
	Stormy Sea mm. 1-8 m. 9	The “Wild Sea.” The piece opens with student interpretations of a “The Wild Sea” performed by small mixed instrument ensembles or “color groups.” Each small group has 4 cells of notated themes with which to experiment and decide how to musically express “The Wild Sea.” They determine their entrances, dynamics , articulation and tempo . The conductor signals the shift from cell to cell. <i>The sound is that of the turbulent, bubbling sea that surrounds Sado Island.</i> At an optional 5 th cell with a fermata collects the groups together over the sound of ocean drums. Dynamics are softer and texture lighter. This brings the turbulent opening to a close.
	The Lone Traveler mm. 10-33	A lone traveler looking out to the Isle of Sado <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pairs of solo flutes, clarinets and oboes play a soft, wandering, legato melody over the “swiisshh” of the ocean drum. Music is reflective and melancholy, as though the traveler were wrapped up in thought while walking the pathway. • Other solo pairs enter and play soft threads polyphonic melodies, carrying the music and the traveler forward. The ocean drums end at m. 21, but melodies continue, eventually played by even more instruments. A ritardando and the shimmer of a suspended cymbal end this section.
	With Increasing Intensity m. 34 m. 58 m. 79 mm. 86-91	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The mood shifts. At first, long chords in some instruments anchor a rhythm pattern chanted by many of the players and a drum. They say these words: <i>“Stormy sea stretching over Sado.”</i> • Music increases in intensity; the traveler’s steps strengthen sounding more purposeful. More players return to their instruments and fewer chant. • The section is a long arc of increasing volume, strength, emotion with a crescendo that carries it forward. Drama ebbs and flows, but expands overall. Melodic material drawn from the Opening Section is reintroduced. • At m. 58, a taiko drum joins the chanting voices and the crescendo builds again. • M. 79, all chanting ceases. Drum patterns are bolder; other instruments play a powerful in unison song along with thundering chords, marcato articulation, and a persistent melody built from syncopated motifs. The traveler journeys on against the elements with determination. • Drums cease, and the section ends with a long chord in all instruments. Then it dies away leaving behind the fading sound of a suspended cymbal (m. 86 – 91) and three octave tones on the glockenspiel (m. 91).
	Soundscape m. 92	Imagine the misty mountain peaks of Sado Island Musicians create a soundscape from the word “shimmer” and from the wispy, soft melodies that opened the section about the lone traveler. A soft chord is struck – then grows in volume to merge into the closing section.
	Heaven’s River m. 97-105	A still starry night – the Milky Way Playing the same material as in the opening “Wild Sea,” musicians interpret the sound and feeling of looking at the Milky Way in the nighttime sky. This is Heaven’s River, as it is called in Japan. They again determine their entrances, dynamics, articulation, and tempo. Similar in length to the opening.

LETTER FROM SADO GLOSSARY

accent	Emphasis or stress on certain beats or parts of the beat
chant/chanting	To speak rhythmically or repetitiously
crescendo	Gradually get louder
cutting (in haiku)	The phrase part of the way through the haiku that offers a short thought, question, or statement. The cutting adds a twist to the poem.
fermata	A symbol placed over a note that indicates it should be held for longer than its normal duration. Indicated by the symbol: 
haiku	Ancient form of Japanese poetry, often about nature and the seasons. The word comes from the Japanese word "hai" which means "insightful," and the term "ku," which means "fun." Usually no more than 20 syllables long.
Heaven's River	Japanese phrase for the Milky Way (see Milky Way)
interpretation	In music, performing in a way so as to bring out the meaning or to demonstrate one's conception of it.
legato	In a smooth, connected style
marcato	March-like articulation
Milky Way	The diffuse band of light that stretches across the night sky consisting of millions of faint stars, nebulae, etc., within Earth's Galaxy
motive/motif	The subject or melody of a piece of music
ostinato	A repeated melodic or rhythmic pattern, often in the bass line
polyphonic	Music with two or more parts (voices), each with an independent melody, but all harmonizing; counterpoint
prediction	Making a forecast or reasoned guess about something that is yet to happen
program music	Music intended to convey an impression of a definite series of images, scenes, or events
ritardando	Gradually slow down



Sado Island

Sado is an island located in the Sea of Japan, west of Japan's main island, Honshu. It is part of the Japanese prefecture (province) of Niigata.

syncopated/syncopation

Placing rhythmic emphasis on a weak beat or weaker part of a beat

Taiko drum

any of the various forms of Japanese barrel shaped drums with lashed or tacked heads, usually played with sticks

tempo

The speed of the beat or pulse

texture

An element of music related to the level of density (thick/thin) or number of layers of sound created by tones played or sung together

twist (in haiku)

The shift in a haiku after the cutting. The cutting adds a "twist" to the poem

unison

Two or more notes sounding the same pitch



Brain Boxes

It's your turn to show what you know about the facets of *Letter from Sado*. Write at least two sentences in each box. If you wish, add sketches and diagrams to provide more information.

Jodie Blackshaw

Haiku

Matsuo Bashō



Sado Island

Heaven's River

Taiko Drums

Name: _____ Date: _____

