

## Chapter 2

### Constructing National Music

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Pages 30-34

Western Music in China

After reading pages 30-34, have students discuss in groups reasons why Western music was well received in China in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century. The following table consists of factors to consider and references for the teacher.

Factors to consider	References for the teacher
Political state in China	Fall of the Qing dynasty and formation of the first Republic government
Identity of a “new” China	Need for a “new” Chinese national identity coincided with the influx of Western music and culture
Media through which Western music was brought	Military, missionaries, merchants, travelers (brought in a different education ideology and hymns with harmony and strophic form)
Characteristics of Chinese music then	Dominated by solo and heterophony, Western harmony, form, and notation were considered “advanced” and “modern”
Scientific and technological advances in the West	Supremacy of Western science and technology

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Pages 31-33

The Traditionalists-Modernists Debate

Divide students into two teams. Each team takes a position: traditionalist or modernist. The traditionalist team believes that traditional music should be preserved and not be influenced by outside sources. The modernist team believes that music should change and move forward (as the society advances) and be receptive to outside sources. Select a local musical tradition as a starting point for the debate. Each team prepares arguments to support their positions.

At the conclusion of the debate, ask the class to make suggestions for Chinese musicians in the early twentieth century on how they should receive the influence of Western music.

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Pages 36-41

Comparing the Chinese and Western Orchestras

Find a picture or a sitting chart of a Western orchestra (e.g., <http://library.thinkquest.org/5116/>). Compare it with Figure 2.3 on page 40. Have students point out the similarities and differences. Following are some examples.

Similarities:

- Both are large ensembles.
- Similar instruments are grouped together.
- Conductor is up front and in the middle, visible to everyone in the orchestra.
- ...

Differences:

- The Chinese orchestra has a plucked strings section, but the Western orchestra does not.
- The Chinese orchestra has Chinese instruments, and the Western orchestra has Western instruments.
- The Western orchestra has brass wind instruments, but the Chinese orchestra does not.
- Musicians in the Chinese orchestra wear Chinese-style outfits (and although this is not a necessity, it is revealed in the picture in Figure 2.3).
- ...

Have students listen to the recordings of both a Chinese orchestra and a Western orchestra, and/or to view a video or DVD. Students may identify the unique sounds of each by pointing out (a) various instrument groups such as bowed strings, plucked strings, woodwinds, brass winds, reed instruments, and percussions; (b) relatively loud instruments and relatively soft instruments; (c) combination of various instrumental timbres; and (d) complexity and type of musical textures such as heterophony, polyphony, and homophony.

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Pages 46-47

Cipher Notation in Chinese Music

Cipher notation is commonly used in Chinese music. It is easy and fun to learn if students already have a foundation in Western notation. The cipher notation basically indicates two aspects of the music: pitch and rhythm.

To teach the pitch aspect of the notation, try to follow the steps described here. Modifications may be necessary depending on the students' levels of maturity and musical sophistication.

1. Have students sing a diatonic scale in a key comfortable to them: do, re, me, fa, sol, la, ti, do.

2. Tell students that these pitches are represented by numbers: 1 = do, 2 = re, 3 = mi, 4 = fa, 5 = sol, 6 = la, 7 = ti, and then it goes back to 1 again for the upper octave “do.” However, the upper octave is indicated by adding a dot above the number:

·  
1

So, the diatonic scale in a full octave looks like this:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	· 1
for							
do	re	me	fa	sol	la	ti	do

3. Show **Overhead 2.1** to students. Have students echo-sing the diatonic scale with the teacher as the teacher points to the number for corresponding pitch. Then cover up the solfège names (i.e., showing the numbers only) and repeat the exercise.

4. Use **Overhead 2.1** (showing the numbers only) to sing the solfège names of a song that students may already know. The song should be within the octave. The teacher should not tell students what song they are singing, but just point to the numbers and reconstruct a familiar song by singing the solfège and seeing the numbers only. Ask students to identify the song. Start with a song with mainly stepwise motions, then try to sing songs with some leaps as students are getting used to singing from the numbers. This may take more time for younger students or students with less musical training. Advanced students may succeed with brief periods of practice.

5. Then tell students that a dot below a number represents a lower octave. Use **Overhead 2.2** to practice singing diatonic pitches, including the lower octave notes.

6. The teacher may write on the board using numbers and dots for a tune that students know. The teacher may ask students to identify the song (either before or after students sing it from the numbers). Following is an example, “Happy Birthday”:

5	5	6	5	1	7	
·	·	·	·		·	
5	5	6	5	2	1	
·	·	·	·			
5	5	5	3	1	7	6
·	·				·	·
4	4	3	1	2	1	

The teacher can use the same system to reconstruct any diatonic song.

The rhythm aspect of the cipher notation parallels that of the “flags” and “beams” of the Western notation. Instead of using “flags” and “beams,” the cipher notation uses horizontal lines underneath the numbers.

For example, a line under a number is equivalent to an eighth-note in Western notation.

5 is equivalent to the note “sol” on an eighth-note.

5 6 is equivalent to the notes “sol” and “la,” both on eighth-notes.

Two lines under a number represent a sixteenth-note in Western notation.

5 is equivalent to the note “sol” on a sixteenth-note.

5 6 is equivalent to the notes “sol” and “la,” both on sixteenth-notes.

5 6 5 6 is equivalent to the notes “sol,” “la,” “sol,” and “la,” all on sixteenth-notes.

The lines can be used in combination. For example:

5 5 6 is equivalent to the notes “sol” on eighth-note, followed by “sol” and “la” on sixteenth-notes.

A dot next to a number is equivalent to a dotted note in Western notation.

5 • 6 is equivalent to the note “sol” on a dotted-eighth-note and “la” on a sixteenth-note.

5 • 6 is equivalent to the note “sol” on a dotted-quarter-note and “la” on an eighth-note.

Measures and meters work the same way as the Western notation. If there is not a dot next to the number or a line under the number, the note is equivalent to a quarter-note in Western notation. The number “0” (zero) indicates a rest.

Have students add the rhythmic aspect of the songs used in step 6 described earlier in this section. Then practice singing the songs from cipher notation. If students are competent in doing so, the teacher may select a line or sections from Figure 2.5 (pp. 46-47) to sing, depending on the level and singing range of the students.

Once students acquire cipher notation reading skill, they should be much more ready to proceed to **Activity 2.3** (p. 45).

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Pages 45-49

Music Historiography Project

After reading the stories of Liu Tianhua and Abing from pages 45 to 49, invite a local folk musician to class. Have the folk musician talk about his or her story or musical path. Pay attention to how the story works within the social setting of the time and how the music is changed through the path of the folk musician, perhaps in playing techniques, repertoires, and people with whom the folk musician interacts. Consider how the folk musician has contributed to the music that he or she plays. Compare those to that of Liu Tianhua and Abing for *erhu* music. Following is a table for the teacher's reference.

Liu Tianhua	Abing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• adopted Western music techniques and pedagogy for <i>erhu</i> playing</li><li>• modernized and promoted Chinese music</li><li>• wrote 47 exercises for the <i>erhu</i></li><li>• composed 10 solos for <i>erhu</i></li><li>• established foundation of modern <i>erhu</i> playing</li><li>• elevated <i>erhu</i> into the academy</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• discovered and promoted by Yang Yinliu, in 1950, as a hero representing the triumph of the oppressed in the new China</li><li>• lived as a miserable, poor, blind musician</li><li>• recognized by scholars as a patriot and a revolutionary figure in the “new” China despite his meager economic status</li></ul>

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All

Page 53

Dualism

Dualism is an important concept in Chinese philosophy. The “binaries” described on page 53 about *pipa* music are reflections of the philosophy. Using the binaries from page 53 as examples, have students find examples of “binaries” around them. Following are some examples:

Black	-	White
Cold	-	Hot
Day	-	Night
Earth	-	Heaven
Female	-	Male
Free	-	Restricted
Happy	-	Sad
Moon	-	Sun
Old	-	Young
Strong	-	Weak

Discuss with students how musical expressions might be manipulated to reflect these “binaries” and the changes and variations in between each. Think of musical parameters such as the following:

Complex	-	Simple
Fast	-	Slow
Heavy	-	Light
High	-	Low
Large	-	Small
Loud	-	Soft
Long	-	Short
Thick	-	Thin

Although none of these is one-to-one (i.e., no one musical parameter to one “binary”), students should be aware of the extremes, tensions, and negotiations in musical expressions and what is being expressed.

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All

Page 55

*Pipa* Solo “Ambush from All Sides” (CD track 19)

Expand on **Activity 2.6** on page 55 by listening to, or viewing a video recording of, the entire piece “Ambush from All Sides.” The most common version of the entire piece is about five to six minutes in duration. One may be able to find an audio or video recording online by using these keywords: “*pipa*,” “solo,” and “ambush”; see an example at <http://vids.myspace.com/index.cfm?fuseaction=vids.individual&VideoID=22924474>

Follow the same outline for **Activity 2.6** for the entire piece.

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All

CD 20

Sounds of *Guzheng*

Have students listen to CD track 20 and jot down the feelings that the sound offers them. Some feelings might possibly be calm, smooth, flowing, stable, soothing, mild, and so on. Then ask students what qualities or characteristics of the sound suggest these feelings. Students might point out the glissando, pitch bending, descending pentatonic scale embellishment, moderate tempo, and so forth. Point out that many of such qualities are characteristic of *guzheng* sound.

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