

Chapter 3

Regional Musics with the National Soundscape

S, C/U

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Regional and National Music

Read the author's quotation from Li Minxiong on page 59. Use **Worksheet 3.1** to determine the characteristics of regional and national music where the students reside. Discuss whether there are parallels between China and where the students reside.

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Pages 60-61

A Cultural Alert in Translation

When we study the music of an unfamiliar culture, we often translate words and terms from the indigenous culture being studied. However, meanings often get lost during the translation, not only in specialized terms, but also in “regular” words that seem unimportant. An example of such a “regular” word is described in the paragraph that begins on page 60 and ends on page 61. *Fazhan* is normally translated as “development.” Based on that paragraph, explain the meaning of *fazhan*. Then investigate what the “lost meaning” could be when *fazhan* is merely translated as “development.”

Below is a list of connotations for the teacher's reference:

- Fazhan* in Chinese music:
- Transformation of music according to Western music sensibilities
 - Consistency in tuning and performing styles
 - Composition and writing of music in notation
 - Predetermined treatment of music
 - Experimentation with new sound
 - Breaking away from traditions
 - The concept that music without *fazhan* is backward and untrained
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Pages 65-66, **Activity 3.2**, CD track 21, CD track 22

Singing from Cipher Notation

Prior to listening to CD tracks 21 and 22, remind students of the cipher notation activity from the previous chapter. The teacher may set a moderate tempo and a starting pitch. Students should practice singing from the cipher notation of “Double Lament” (p. 65) and “The Geese Landing

on the Flat Sand” (p. 66). Using solfège syllables (e.g., 1 = do, 2 = re, . . .). Proceed to activities as directed in **Activity 3.2**. Teachers and students may find “The Geese Landing on the Flat Sand” (“Luoyan pingsha”) easier to follow.

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Watch a Video of Chinese Opera

Use local resources to play a video clip of a Chinese opera for students. Some suggested videos are listed in the book (page 173):

- *Farewell my concubine*. 1993. Directed by Kaige Chen. Miramax Films in association with Maverick Picture Company and Tomson (HK) Films Co., Ltd.
- *Heritage of Chinese opera: Chinese art films*. 1978. Distributed by Chinese Art Files. Kwang Hwa Mass Communications.

Ask students to pay attention to the role of percussion instruments. Have students describe what the percussionists are playing:

- a. When actors/actresses enter and exit the scene
 - b. For punctuation of sentences
 - c. For emphasis of words
 - d. For heightening of emotions
 - e. When there is an interlude between scenes and actions
 - f. When there is action or fight
 - g. When a melody begins or ends
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Page 67, CD tracks 23, 24, and 25

Listen for Three Types of Vocal Production

Play CD tracks 23, 24, and 25. Have students pick which vocal production is the most natural, normal, or ordinary [Answer: track 23]. Tell students that this is the *ping hou* (“ordinary voice”), which is used without falsetto to represent the roles of young males or older woman.

Ask students which of the three tracks has the vocal production that represents the roles of females [Answer: track 24]. Tell students that this is the *zi hou* (“boy’s voice”), which is used for female roles.

Also ask students which of the three tracks has the vocal production for strong male and martial characters [Answer: track 25]. Tell students that this is the *da hou* (“big voice”), being used for roles of strong males and martial characters.

The order of presentation and questions may be mixed.

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Qupai Exercise in English

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Explain to students that *qupai* are songs in Cantonese opera that are based on existing widely played melodies, including their rhythm and meter. Have students compose individually or in small groups using a well-known melody by following these steps:

1. Identify a melody that is widely known in the nation where students reside.
2. Write new lyrics to the existing melody without changing it; keep melodic modifications to a minimum; the theme of the lyrics may be similar to or different from the original song.
3. Pay attention to the important words and rhythmic and melodic accents.
4. Maintain cohesive meaning of the lyrics throughout the song.
5. Share the new lyrics with the class and have the class sing the song with new lyrics.

Note that music notation may not be necessary for this activity, because students should be very familiar with the melody used. If students are more comfortable writing the new lyrics underneath the notation, then they should find or dictate the notation of the melody using a notation software (or by hand).

At the end of the activity, the teacher should point out to students that English is not a tonal language. The pitch of an individual word does not affect the meaning, which makes it easier to come up with new lyrics. Using *qupai* in Cantonese opera songs has an added challenge: to have the tones of the Chinese words matching the pitches in the melodic contour without changing the meaning of the words.

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Online Research on *Jingju*

Pages 69-74

Have students Google these terms online: “*jingju*,” “Peking opera,” and “Beijing opera.” They refer to the same operatic genre. Then visit the websites with video clips, audio clips, or other information. Individuals may share in a small group or in class what additional information they find out, how they would describe *jingju*, and why *jingju* is so popular inside and outside of China.

An extension to this activity is to add the term “face painting” in the Google search. One may come up with sites such as the following:

<http://www.paulnoll.com/China/Opera/>

<http://ezinearticles.com/?Beijing-Opera-Masks-and-Face-Painting&id=1140805>

<http://www.hometownchina.com/beijing3.htm>

Point out to students that face painting of *jingju* characters is an art of its own. It is highly stylized and specific. Not every character in *jingju* has elaborated face painting, but face painting can be found in various regional operas. These face paintings are rich in symbolic representations. Different colors and patterns not only represent a mix of personalities, they represent a specific role in an opera. Students should find out from various websites the general representations of colors and patterns in these face paintings in *jingju*. For example, generally speaking:

Red: loyalty

Purple: resolution and resourcefulness

Black: honesty, uprightness

White: treachery, cruelty, bossiness

Blue: bravery

Green: justice, chivalry

Yellow: brutality, ferociousness

A further extension of this activity is for students to use the same representational principles of colors and patterns in face paintings in *jingju* to draw individually, in colors and patterns, a face painting on paper to reflect their own personalities as they perceived them. If there are personality qualities not found in *jingju*, students may use additional colors to represent them. Then have students present their face paintings on paper and explain the symbolic representations of themselves as shown in their face paintings. This project may be implemented in conjunction with an art class.

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Practice *Jijifeng* (“A Gust of Wind”)

Pages 71-72, CD track 27

Have students listen to the beginning portion of CD track 27 where the rhythmic syllables are being said. Then have students imitate the sounds of “B” (ba), “D” (da), “T” (te), “K” (kuang), and “C” (ce). Once students can grasp the sounds of each, have students say the syllables together with the speaking part of the recording. Students may look at the notation printed on page 71 as an aid. Practice a few times. Then have the students say the syllables alongside with the percussion portion of the recording.

Point out to the students that these syllables help percussionists learn the patterns in the context of the ensemble. It is also important to point out that the pattern does not fit into regular beats, as in most Western music. Proceed to **Activity 3.5** (p. 72) to perform the pattern and to learn to perform another pattern.

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Page 81

Listing the Rules of Playing *Jiangnan Sizhu*

After reading page 81, have students list the rules of playing *jiangnan sizhu*:

1. Performance relies on collective efforts, so no individual part should stand out like a solo.
2. Each player performs his or her version of the melody by altering it on the spot.
3. Each part should be performed in relationship to the others. When someone is performing a complicated version of the melody, others should stay clear and not be in direct conflict. When someone is shifting to a higher register, others should go in the opposite direction in order to create a sense of balance.

Repeat the activity “Creating Heterophonic Texture” in Chapter 1 of this manual with these rules in mind. A different melody could be used.

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Pages 79-84, CD tracks 31 and 32

Comparing *Jiangnan Sizhu* and *Chuida/Luogu*

Listen to CD tracks 31 and 32 (one immediately after another) and compare the following using **Worksheet 3.2**: types of instruments, texture and instrumental dialogues, embellishment, and overall feeling. Following is a table for the teacher’s reference.

	<i>Jiangnan Sizhu</i> CD track 31	<i>Chuida/Luogu</i> CD track 32
Types of instruments	Strings and winds	Winds and percussions
Texture	Heterophony	Dialogues/interactions
Embellishment	More	Less
Overall feeling	[open-ended]	[open-ended]
