

Chapter 4

Musical Interfaces between East and West

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Pages 86-87

Interactions with China

While the text (pp. 86-87) cites examples of musical interactions between China and the West, ask students if they have personal interactions with people, artifacts, or events from China. Hints may include (a) what they have at home that is made in China (e.g., toys, furniture, kitchenware, clothes, electronics, and holiday ornaments); (b) people they know, including public figures, who are from China or have been to China; (c) Chinese food they might have had; (d) Chinese celebrations and festivals they are aware of; and (e) movies or music they know to be of Chinese origin. Teachers should point out the opportunities, and their frequency that people have of interacting with various aspects of China in modern daily life. Music is no exception among modern exchanges between China and the West.

S, C/U

Pages 88-89, CD tracks 18, 20, 33, and 34

Comparing Qualities of “Chineseness”

Listen to CD tracks 33 and 34, then compare them to CD tracks 18 and 20. Use **Worksheet 4.1** to list some similarities and differences between the two sets of musical examples. Pay attention to characteristics of rhythm and meter, tuning, key and scale, embellishments, melody, texture and accompaniment, timbre (not just the sound of the different instruments, but also the types of timbre the instruments may produce), dynamics, phrasing, and other expressive qualities.

Discuss how stereotypes of Chinese music were practiced, and the selective use of elements of Chinese music in a Western musical context. The discussion may be extended to other aspects of Chinese culture: How are different elements of the Chinese culture being portrayed or applied in the daily lives of people where the students reside? The discussion may be further extended to include how elements of various cultures are represented and the consequences of these representations.

S, C/U

Pages 91-93

Impact of Western Music in Traditional Chinese Musical Practices

After reading the text, pages 91-93, have students make a list of changes in traditional Chinese musical practices. Following is a list for the teacher’s consideration:

- Music performed in modern concert halls
 - Composers' experimentation with new ways of composing music
 - Modernized traditional Chinese instruments
 - The combination of Western instruments with traditional instruments to form new ensembles
 - Standardized tuning systems and compositional procedures
 - The use of printed music
 - Standardized scores
 - The establishment of conservatories
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Pages 97-98, CD track 35

Is This Chinese Music?

Listen to CD 35 and have students point out the Chinese qualities of the piece (e.g., the melodic qualities, phrasing, fluid timing, etc.). Remind students that this piece, *Mutong duandi* ("A Shepherd's Flute"), is composed by a Chinese composer (He Luting). Divide the class into two groups based on their beliefs about whether this piece should be considered "Chinese music." Hold a mini-debate, with each side supporting their beliefs with good reasons. At the end of the debate, try to have the class come up with a definition of "Chinese music" and a best description of *Mutong duandi*.

S, C/U

Pages 101-102, CD tracks 36, 37

Discuss Chou's Philosophy on New Chinese Music

Consider the quotation from the text, "Chou's works are mostly based on the underlying principles and essence of Chinese music rather than simply borrowing the superficial elements like a pentatonic scale or folk song melody" (p. 101). How can we tell the difference between the two: (a) music based on the underlying principles and essence of Chinese music, and (b) music that borrows superficial elements of Chinese music like a pentatonic scale or a folk song melody? Listen to CD tracks 36 and 37, read pages 101 to 102, and pursue **Activity 4.5** (p. 102) to discover an answer.

S, C/U

Pages 107-108

What Happened to Chinese Popular Music in the 1950s?

There was a major change in the popular music scene in China from 1949 and on through the 1950s. Make a list of the relevant events and discuss their relationships. Following is a list of events for the teacher's reference:

- The Chinese Communist Party gained complete political control of the mainland in 1949.
 - Production of popular songs halted in the mainland and was replaced by revolutionary music and songs laden with political propaganda.
 - Popular music in the mainland shifted to songs with strong anti-Western imperialist messages written to glorify the Communist Party.
 - Significant part of the movie and recording industry moved from the mainland to Hong Kong, a British colony at the time.
 - Production of Shanghai-style popular songs continued in Hong Kong and Taiwan.
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S, C/U

Pages 105-112, CD tracks 40, 41, 42, 43

Western Parallels of Chinese Popular Songs

Students should be familiar with these Western popular music styles: big band, folk pop, soft rock, and hard rock. Have students listen to CD tracks 40, 41, 42, and 43. Ask students to identify the closest parallel of a Western popular style for each track. Discuss whether the Chinese popular styles were directly influenced by the Western parallels. The answer is “yes.”

Discuss what is characteristically Chinese about these four songs (other than language). Consider melodic qualities, content of the lyrics, singing style, and instrumentation.

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Page 108, CD track 41

Swaying to the Beat

Listen to CD track 41 and have students sway with the music. Notice the absence of percussion instruments, and yet how the beat is revealed softly in the accompaniment.
