

## Chapter 6

### Chinese Music beyond China

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S, C/U

Pages 141-142

Test of Lau's "Theory" of Memory, Nostalgia, and Imagination

Lau writes, "Three interrelated forces are at work in the process [of Chinese musical activities outside of China]: memory, nostalgia, and imagination" (p. 141). Interview a local musician who participates in a musical tradition originating from elsewhere than China. Ask questions that suggest reasons for memory, nostalgia, and imagination. Examine the answers and see if the local musician participates in the tradition for one or more of the three reasons. Following are some sample interview questions:

1. Do you remember listening to or participating in the musical tradition when you were growing up? Are you trying to do the same thing as you did before? [supportive of the "memory" aspect of the theory]
2. Do you miss listening to or participating in the musical tradition as you did in the past? When you participate, does it remind you of your home heritage or homeland? [supportive of the "nostalgia" aspect of the theory]
3. Do you participate in the musical tradition as an effort to create a new type of music that is rooted in the tradition yet which is somewhat different from the original? [supportive of the "imagination" aspect of the theory]

You may add more questions as you see fit. It is possible that all three aspects of the "theory" are supported, but may be to different extents. Try to find out if any of the three aspects dominate in explaining why the local musician participates in the musical tradition. Also, determine how the three aspects of the "theory" relate to each other.

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S, C/U

Pages 144-146

Domination of Cantonese Music

Discuss why Cantonese music was perceived as representative of all Chinese music rather than as a regional music from China. Consider the viewpoints of (a) the Cantonese immigrants and (b) non-Cantonese living in the United States. A main reason was the limited exposure by the Cantonese to other kinds of Chinese musics, which then influenced the non-Cantonese view on what Chinese music might be. Extend the discussion on the effect of limited exposure on one's viewpoint in defining a type of music.

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AA  
Pages 152-153  
Jon Jang's Music

Listen to samples of Jon Jang's music at his website (<http://www.jonjang.com/discography/>). Choose four of his pieces. Use **Workset 6.1** to list the Chinese elements and Western elements in the music. Discuss how these elements work together. Consider elements such as instruments, texture, tonality, rhythm and meter, melody, harmony, and dynamic expression and phrasing. This activity may be extended by listening to more than four pieces and discussing whether there are any common qualities in pieces heard.

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AA  
Page 157, CD track 52  
Chinese Choral Work

Listen to CD track 52 "Exiting the Border." Have student respond to the following questions:

- What is the overall mood change of the song? [Answer: From slow and quiet, gradually increasing in intensity, to reaching a climax at the end]
  - What techniques are used to gradually increase the intensity of the mood? [Answer: Speed, dynamics, and thickness in texture]
  - What might be the meaning of the lyrics in the ending phrase (i.e., the climax)? [Answer: The title "Exiting the Border" is a hint; the ending phrase means "wish to return to the homeland"]
  - While the song was composed in the nineteenth-century Western choral style, what Chinese elements can be found? [Answer: Pentatonic melodic style, flexible tempo, interpretation with many subtle expressions, and content of the lyrics]
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S, C/U  
Page 158  
Karaoke Settings

Use **Worksheet 6.2** to list the characteristics of the setting of karaoke among Chinese communities. Then list the same for a local karaoke setting, which may or may not be in a Chinese community. Compare the two settings and discuss the similarities and differences in their social outcomes.

Below is a list of characteristics of karaoke setting in Chinese communities as described on page 158:

- An activity among friends
- A way of participating in the community

- An alternative to singing operatic songs with live instrumental accompaniments
  - Results that exert beyond social, economical, and musical concerns
  - The creation of communities
  - The establishment of a bond that reinforces Chinese identity
  - The fusion of traditional musical practices with new technology
  - An outlet to exercising creativity and renewing ethnic ties
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S, C/U

Pages 159-162, CD track 53

Tradition Meets Contemporary

Listen to CD track 53. It is clear evidence of a musical crossroad between traditional and contemporary styles. Describe the contemporary components of the music, such as the heavy rock beat, synthesized accompaniment, and commercial packaging. Ask students what other music has these same components [Answer: most of the popular styles]. Then ask students what musical traditions, other than Chinese, have successfully combined a type of traditional music with a popular style. Discuss the effects of this fusion. Frame the discussion in the context of globalization and commercialization of traditional musics.

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