

Lesson Title: Chinese Musical Instruments and Mental Imagery

Class and Grade level(s): Kindergarten

Goals and Objectives – To introduce children to the music of another world culture through comparing and contrasting Chinese musical instruments and styles to the kind of Western music we have been listening to all year by singing, playing instruments, and watching and talking about authentic performances using vocabulary we have learned up to this point.

Time required/class periods needed: One to two class periods

Primary source bibliography:

<http://www.philmultic.com/liufang/video/> pipa
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w9LRN5naG4s> dizi
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OKHSr_Qm0VY suona
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NXZ4tfBiMrE> sheng
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7pRfIpb9cU> guzheng
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O_bPQnUfklo sheng and suona
<http://theshengplayer.net/the-chinese-mouth-organ-sheng/> about the sheng
<http://www.philmultic.com/home/instruments/> About Chinese traditional instruments
<http://www.history.com/topics/holidays/chinese-new-year> about Chinese New Year

Other resources used: Classroom presentations by musicians if possible.

Required materials/supplies: Chinese instruments if possible: dizi, Suona, guzheng, sheng etc.; chopsticks; rhythm sticks; recording of *Chinese Dance* (Tea) by Tchaikowsky, CD player

Vocabulary: Dizi, Pipa, Suona, Sheng, Guzheng, pentatonic scale

Procedure: OPTIONAL: Introduce Chinese New Year and to the zodiac animal for this year. Show pictures of the celebration culled from the internet on the smart board.

Review rhythm sticks and talk about Chinese food and chopsticks. Pretending that the rhythm sticks are giant chopsticks, play a follow the leader rhythm patter game to the Chinese Dance (Tea) from The Nutcracker Suite by Tchaikovsky. The steady beat should stressed as should movement patterns in 8 beat sections. Teachers' note: I try to "trick" them so they have to focus closely.

After the instrument game, introduce the pipa to the kids on the Smartboard using link given above. The piece we hear is *Snow Falling on the Evergreens*. Ask the children if there is a steady beat and a memorable melody. (There isn't) Then ask "Is it still music?" Gather opinions then tell them that, yes, it is. Just different from our own. Introduce the pentatonic scale here and talk about the scene this piece of Chinese music paints in the mind. Have students close their eyes and lead them through the piece helping them visualize evergreen trees, pine trees (You might want to show a picture of this) with snow falling softly on their needles.

More questions about the *pipa*: What instrument do we know that it looks like? Guitar.

If it were in the orchestra what family could it belong to? The strings.

Then we look watch other youtube links to see other Chinese instruments in action.

The dizi. What kind of instrument does this remind you of? Flute.

The Suona. What does its sound like? Birds talking. Stress that nature is important in Chinese music and art.

The Sheng: You might mention that this instrument was the inspiration for a pipe organ.

The guzheng: Like an autoharp or zither.

Assessment: Have students turn their backs and listen to each instrument to see if they can identify it. If you have illustrations of the instruments, the children can simply hold up a picture of the instrument rather than yell out the name.