

Chinese Music: Lecture Handout and Study Guide
MUS3520: Non-Western Music
Pelkey (2006)

Customary Division of Chinese Musical History

“Formative”	pre-history to Zhou (246 BC)
Chin to Tang	(246 BC - 906 AD)
“National”	(906-1911)
“World Music Period”	(Twentieth Century)

Foundations of Chinese Musical Thought and Practice in the Formative Period

earliest surviving musical artifacts

various written sources

Book of Rites (1000s BC)

Confucian sources also discuss music

Ancient Chinese Ideas about Music:

- (1) Mythological sources
- (2) theoretical bases of music

“Lü system”

“Pentatonic” runs through all ancient Chinese thought:

some use of simultaneous pitch, but not harmony as in the west -- music is primarily linear, and coloristic

rhythm

Instruments

“8” also plays a major part in Chinese thought and Chinese music

yin and yang together equal 8

8 sounds -- “pa yin”

8 types of instruments based on types of materials:

Percussion

Membranophones [preferences is for lithophones]

Chordophones

pi’pa

Ch’in

Aerophones

ti-tzu (xixu)

sona

sheng or cheng

Religion and Music:

Main Events in Second Period

Main Events in the National Period

foundations of Chinese Opera

- Sheng -- old (court official / baritone)
young (lover / tenor or falsetto)
wu sheng (military / acrobatic)
- tan -- ch'ing'l -- faithful wife or daughter
hua-tan -- carefree woman / flirt
- ching -- various (villains, gods) -- painted faces indicate the type of ching
- ch'on -- clown (white face paint around eyes and nose)

Recent Music History:

Chinese Revolution (from 1930s until 1949)

yangge

Songs for the Masses

Cultural Revolution (1966-1976)

Western-style Musical Conservatories

Shanghai "Popular Songs"

Since 1980

Other forms of Chinese Popular Music (know these)

disike

Canto Pop

xibeifeng

jingge

Study Questions:

1. Read the chapter on China from Non-Western Art. Consider how Confucianism and Daoism have shaped Chinese cultural history, both in the visual and music arts.
2. Be able to briefly trace the history of Chinese ceramics, its most important contribution to the history of visual arts.
3. Trace the ways in which Confucian and other Chinese philosophical ideas shaped the history of Chinese painting.

Art Terms or Concepts:

boshan xiangu

Guanyin

“Admonitions of the Instructress to the Ladies of the Court”

landscape painting styles in the Northern and Southern Song dynasty periods