Music in China

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And

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History

• Chinese Music is known to be at least 7,000 to 8,000 years old!
• Originally, music was only played for the royal court or religious heads
Not for Enjoyment

- Because of the Confucian philosophy that dominated Chinese culture, music was not originally a form of amusement, but rather meant to calm passion, dispel unrest, alleviate lust, and purify one's thoughts.

- Traditionally the Chinese believe that sound influences the harmony of the universe.

- Music must then be subtle and great refinement in the performance.
16th Century to 221 B.C.

- Large Instruments not meant to be carried
- These are called the horizontal instruments.
- Seen to the left is a yangqin
221 B.C. to 220 A.D.

- Hand-held instruments become popular
- Lute family becomes instrument of choice
- These are the vertical instruments
- Below is a ruan
220 – 907 A.D.

- Bell and Stone Chimes disappear and portable percussion instruments replace them
- Double Reeds become popular
- Fiddling is enjoyed by those of all classes
- Below is a suona
960 – 1911 A.D.

- Fingerboard lute becomes a popular instrument of choice
  - Important to theatrical music and ballad singing
- Instruments that are plucked and don’t have frets as well as bowed fiddles are used most frequently.
Instruments

- Classified based on material it is made from
  - Metal, stone, silk (string instruments), bamboo, gourd, clay, skin, and wood

- Types of instruments
  - Zithers, flutes, panpipes, mouth organ, clappers, gongs, lutes, fiddles, stone chimes, and bronze bells
Horse-Head Fiddle

– Popular in Mongolia
– Influenced the European string instruments
  • Brought to Europe by Marco Polo
Ehru

- Originally from the western part of China
- Important instrument for the sound of the Beijing Opera
- Player stands instrument on lap and moves bow across vertical strings
Flute

- Originally made from bone
- Now is traditionally made of bamboo
- In the 20th Century, one bone flute was found to be around 7000 years old!
Pipa (Lute)

- Named after loquat fruit.
- Made in the Qin Dynasty and loved by all
- Predominate in orchestra
- Changed from held horizontally and played with pick to held vertically and plucked with fingers
Chinese Opera

Important because…

Jackie Chan got his start in the Chinese Opera!!!!

It’s also one of the oldest dramatic art forms in the world, dating back to approximately 600 A.D. and the Tang Dynasty.
Chinese Opera

- Very different from the Opera we’re used to.
- A lot of the instrumentation is percussion.
- They use traditional instruments like the Erhu, gong, and lute.
- Unique features include acrobatics, costumes, make up and use of martial arts
Chinese Opera

- Approximately 300 different regional styles of Chinese Opera.
- Share many characteristics
  - Role types
  - Performances
  - Emphasis
  - Tell the same stories
Chinese Opera
(A brief history)

• First created at the beginning of 7th century
• Evolved over the centuries, creating the different styles of opera.
  • Tea houses were where early actors practiced
  • Chinese opera was banned during Mao Zedong’s rule
• Survived everything else, like the warlord era and Japanese occupation.
Chinese Opera

- Within the categories of male (sheng), female (dan), painted face (jing), and clown (chou), there are subcategories.
- Each actor is only trained for one of these.
- To be trained in more than one is to be extremely talented.
Chinese Opera

• Face Painting is one of the most fascinating and recognizable features of Chinese Opera.
• Characters’ faces are painted to represent their personality, role, and fate.
Chinese Opera

• Chinese Opera serves as a medium for telling Chinese folklore and history.
• Many operas are based on legendary tales and actual historic events, like “The Three Kingdoms,” and “Outlaw of the Marsh.”
• Tells the stories common to all Chinese people.
Chinese Opera
(and it’s appeal to Westerners)

• Face Paint and Costumes
  – Elaborate
  – Enable audience what is happening without necessarily understanding the actual words.

• Martial Arts and Acrobatics
  • Actors have fire spray out of their mouths
  • Gallop while squatting pretending to be a dwarf.

“One minute's performance on the stage takes ten years' practice behind the scenes.”
Taiwanese Opera

- Very similar to Chinese Opera, except for names of certain elements and the stories that are told.
- More Westernized, using instruments like the saxophone and guitar.
- Brought to television screens in the 1980s
Opera
(a few examples)

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zHPegoquV5I
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7-dPC-srlbs
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G0qEEv43Gdc
Modern Music!

You’d never guess it but...

Music in China is just like music in America!

• Categories
• Concerts
Modern Music

- Use popular Western instruments while still incorporating traditional instruments.
- Mix traditional instruments with Western ways of singing.
- Mixing of Chinese and Western styles gives modern Chinese music a unique sound and plenty of room for expression.
Modern Music-instrumental

• Still very traditional
• Uses some more Western instruments, like the piano.
• More modern style sometimes
• Biggest change is that it is no longer as restricted as it used to be.
Modern Music

Some examples!

http://library.thinkquest.org/20443/modern_music.html
FINALE!!!!!!!

Are you ready?!

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AFycchFzHP8