

Reviewed by Nancy Lineburgh

Ni Hao! Sing and Chant Your Way to China!

Written by Chet-Yeng Loong, PhD

Illustrated by: Wu YanWei and Ding Yi

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Children are growing up in a globalized world. Multicultural music education provides a means for teachers to deepen students' perspective and understanding of cultures other than their own. You may think, however, that teaching songs and chants in Mandarin to your students is an impossible task, even if you can find repertoire appropriate for them. Put your fears aside. *Ni Hao! Sing and Chant Your Way to China!* by Chet-Yeng Loong offers authentic Chinese songs and chants for students in pre-K through Grade 5.

During her childhood in Malaysia and, later, throughout her many travels to mainland China, Dr. Loong amassed a number of forgotten songs and chants, nine of which comprise this collection. In the introduction to the book, the author shares her goal to "... help students become creative, active music makers as they sing, chant, and move to authentic Chinese repertoire while simultaneously learning about Chinese culture." Certified in both Orff Schulwerk and Kodály, Dr. Loong brings this expertise to the structure of the book and the design of the activities.

The book and accompanying DVD and SMART Board® files provide step-by-step instructions for teaching the songs and chants and for using the material to teach curricular music concepts. The SMART Board® files eliminate much of the

preparation needed to create the lessons and can be used whether or not you have a SMART Board®.

The first part of the DVD, *The Land of China*, is an overview of the heritage and culture. Seven 4-5-minute vignettes, filmed in China, feature the country's history, food, farming, religion, philosophy, language, and calligraphy and writings. This presents students and teachers alike an opportunity to view Chinese culture and heritage in an authentic manner that complements the songs and chants.

The second half of the DVD includes video recordings of a native child and/or the author speaking or singing the material and demonstrating any accompanying motions. Much of the material is first presented at tempo, then at half speed. Teachers can use the videos to learn the material as well as teach it to students. Additionally, the author has carefully considered the process of teaching the Mandarin text. Orff practitioners will recognize the approach as the language instruction begins with a few key words from the text, and then expands to single lines before the class moves on to the whole text.

The SMART Board® files provide editable slides containing audio clips of the songs and chants, and the charming artwork of illustrators Wu YanWei and Ding Yi adeptly symbolizes them. Audio clips, which are sometimes just

one phrase and sometimes an entire song or chant, and the artwork, can be unlocked and rearranged on the slides. Together, the DVD and SMART Board® slides make teaching the Mandarin text easy for educators and fun for children, and teachers can learn right along with their students. Even if the only goal is to teach the song or chant as a part of a cultural unit, the SMART Board® files facilitate and amplify the learning.

So much basic vocabulary appears naturally relating to this repertoire, including counting to 10 and the days of the week, that a child who learns all of the songs and chants would have a beginning grasp of the Mandarin language.

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The SMART Board® slides can also be used to teach curricular music concepts. A chart at the beginning of the book suggests grade levels and featured music concepts for each piece. Instructions for teaching them are carefully laid out in the book and supported by the SMART Board® files. Rhythmic concepts include quarter, two-eighths, half, sixteenth, dotted eighth-sixteenth, and whole notes, as well as eighth rest. Orff practitioners will notice the melodies are based in do pentatonic. Two of the activities involve form analysis.

Many of the songs and chants include orchestrations for small percussion and/or Orff barred instruments. Careful instructions are again provided, including suggestions for adding body percussion, ways to put the ensembles together, and suggestions for creating a performance.

The repertoire the author chose is enchanting and musically quite accessible for elementary children. The first four pieces are chants: *The Door Is Open But I Can't Get In*, *The Wind Is Here*, *Little Yellow Dog*, and *Rock Scissors Cloth*. The rest are do pentatonic songs: *My Lovely Little Rabbits*, *Little Pig*, *Pull the Carrot*, *Fishing Song*, and *Four Little Fishes*. Together the nine songs and chants comprise a logical sequence of music concepts and age appropriateness for a wide range of students.

A teacher dedicated to providing Chinese repertoire for students in preschool through Grade 5 could easily choose from this offering. Each grade could learn a song, and then present it in a program of Chinese music. Likewise, pieces could be grouped together to create a Chinese unit for one grade. So much basic vocabulary appears naturally relating to this repertoire, including counting to 10 and the days of the week, that a child who learns all of the songs and chants would have a beginning grasp of the Mandarin language. *Ni Hao! Sing and Chant Your Way to China!* is a timeless resource that offers a captivating journey for both you and your students. To quote the author, "Enjoy!" ■

NANCY LINEBURGH is currently retired from public school and university teaching, but continues to make music with preschool and elementary children by teaching private music play classes and piano lessons in Yellow Springs, Ohio. She holds degrees and certifications in Dalcroze, Kodály, Orff Schulwerk, and Music Learning Theory. Dr. Lineburgh mentored Dr. Loong when she was an undergraduate and graduate student at The University of Akron and has accompanied her to China on two occasions. She has written articles for state, national, and international publications, including *The Orff Echo*.