

Shaw Pong Liu

***Exploring China: The “Middle Kingdom” Through
Music & Story Educational Guide, Grades K-8***



About the Performance

From the grasslands of Mongolia to the high mountain of Yunnan, master musician Shaw Pong Liu takes audiences on a musical journey through historical and contemporary China. Her suitcase packed with languages and musical instruments, Shaw Pong weaves history, geography, the Mandarin language and Chinese folk music in a dynamic exploration of China.



About the Artist

Shaw Pong Liu is a violinist who is fluent in both western and Chinese musical traditions. She is also a composer, a teaching artist and an activist. She engages diverse communities with creative music and social dialogue by innovating the audience experience of live music. Collaborating with artists from a wide range of disciplines, Shaw Pong creates genre-defying performances which interplay written and improvised music with narration, storytelling and movement. She is a member of Yo Yo MA's Silk Road Ensemble and was the 2016 City of Boston Artist-In-Residence.

Program Learning Goals

1. To introduce and explore the concept of a tonal language through the four tones of Mandarin, the official dialect of China.
2. To demonstrate how music can help us understand different places and cultures.

Essential Questions

1. How do we use language to communicate? Can we also communicate with music?
2. How are language and music similar? How are they different?
3. How can music help us understand different places and culture?

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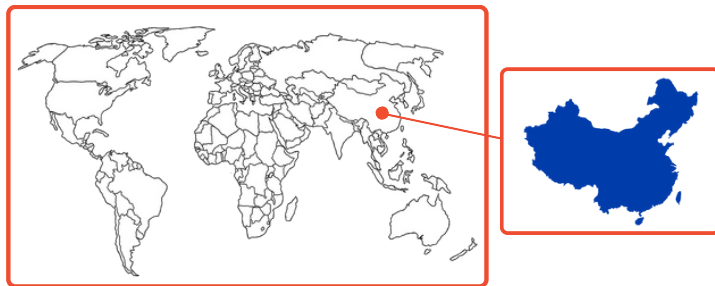
Vocabulary

- **Dynasty:** A series of powerful leaders from the same family
- **Tonal Language:** a language in which different tones create different meanings
- **Tone:** The pitch (high/low) or quality of a sound
- **Mandarin:** A group of languages spoken across most of northern and southwestern China

Key Facts and Cultural Context for Students

Where?

This program explores the music, language, and geography of contemporary and historical China, the largest country in East Asia. Can you find China on the map?



Violin

Erhu

The Violin and the Erhu

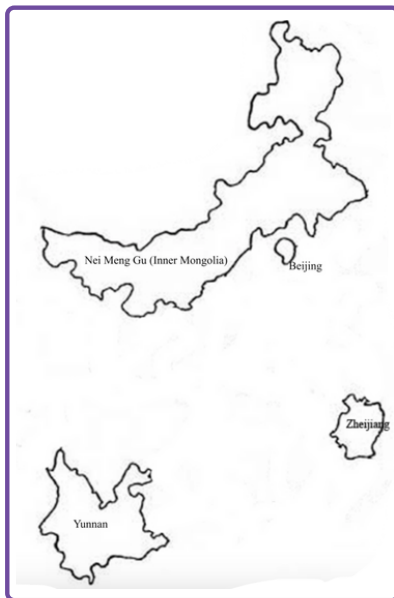
What similarities do you notice between these two instruments? How would you play these instruments? What kinds of sounds do you think each one will make?

Pre-Show Activity: Comparing Geography, Population, and History

- **Geography:** Locate China on a globe or world map. Note the distance between U.S. and China. Using the map on the next page, find and label the following provinces: Yunnan, Zhejiang, Nei Meng Gu (Inner Mongolia) and the capital city of Beijing.
- **Population:** China and the USA are about the same size geographically (3.6 vs. 3.5 million square miles), but their population sizes are very different. Use the attached "Exploring China: Population" worksheet to explore these differences.
- **History:** How many generations of your family have lived in the U.S.? Many Chinese people can count back nearly 4,000 years that their ancestors have lived in the land we now call China. That's up to 160 generations of great-great-grandparents! Use the attached "Exploring China: History" timeline to explore and compare the history of the USA to China.

Post-Show Activity: Write a Story Inspired by the Performance

- Choose a setting from one of the four places we visited during the program: Yunnan (mountainous province); Beijing (capital city); Zhejiang (province of the Butterfly Lovers); Nei Meng Gu, Inner Mongolia (grasslands, home of horses and ancestors of bowed string instruments) and research the regional history, geography, and culture.
- Use <http://www.learnchineseeveryday.com> to practice the four Mandarin tones and the tongue twister "Mom scolded the horse".
- Write a story set in the region you researched. Be sure to include the phrase "Mom scolded the horse", as well as details about the province or region from your research to bring your story to life.
- Illustrate your story with drawings or maps, and share it with a partner or friend.



Exploring China: Geography

Find and label each provinces/regions on the left on the map of China below.



Provinces/Regions:

- Beijing (the capitol city)
- Nei Meng Gu
- Yunnan
- Zhejiang

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Exploring China: Population



China

Landmass
3.6 million square miles
Population
1,394,015,977 people



United States

Landmass
3.5 million square miles
Population
329,877,505 people

- China and the US are about the same size geographically. But in terms of population (the number of people who live in a country), China is much bigger.
- Print out this page and use dried beans, pennies, or other counters to compare the size of China's population to that of the US. If one bean represents 100,000,000 people, how many beans would you put in the outline of China to represent 1,394,015,977 people? How many beans would you need to represent 329,877,505 people in the US outline?
- *If you are at school, you can do this math problem by making outlines for each country on the floor using masking tape, and using your classmates instead of beans to represent population.*

Exploring China: History

China is one of the world's first civilizations. Each successive era has brought language, philosophy, art, technology, and culture that still influence the world today. Many Chinese people can count back up to 4,000 years (as many as 160 generations of great-great-grandparents) that their ancestors have lived in the land we now call China! Use the timeline below to learn about some of the different eras of China from the Bronze Age to today. What was happening in the US during each of these time periods? What was happening in the rest of the world?

Xia Dynasty (c. 2070–1600 BCE)	Early Bronze Age China One of the first dynasties
Ancient China (c. 1600–221 BCE)	The Shang Dynasty (c. 1600–1046 BCE) Chinese civilization began along the Yellow River.
	The Zhou Dynasty (1045-221 BCE) Traditional Chinese philosophies, such as Confucianism and Daoism, developed. China expanded in territory and population.
Imperial China (221 BC – 1912 AD)	Many dynasties rose and fell during this time period. Chinese civilization was grown and prospered in times of peace, when one dynasty rules, then reformed after rebellions and conquests when another rose to take its place.
The Republic of China Era (1912–1949)	The Republican Revolution of 1911, led by Sun Yat-sen, ended the rule of the Qing Dynasty, the last Chinese dynasty. The resulting civil war lasted for decades.
Modern China (1949–Now)	The People's Republic of China was founded in 1949 with the establishment of Communism as China's official form of government.

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Further Resources

- History of Central Asian Nomads and Bowed String Instruments
http://www.festival.si.edu/past_festivals/silk_road/nomads_stories_2.aspx
- Geography Puzzle of China's Provinces
<http://www.yourchildlearns.com/mappuzzle/China-puzzle.html>
- Game Practicing Four Tones of Mandarin (short, only two levels)
<http://www.chinese-ilab.com/games/beginners/1%20pinyin%20lesson/tones%20memory/index.html>
- Brief overview of periods and dynasties in Chinese history:
<https://www.chinahighlights.com/travelguide/culture/china-history.htm>
- Chinese Tongue Twisters:
<http://www.learnchineseeveryday.com/2010/08/14/tongue-twister-绕口令-妈妈骑马/>

Curricular Connections

Music K-12: M.R.07, M.R.8, M.R.09, M.Co.10, M.Co.11

History/Social Science K-12: K.T2, K.T3, 1.T2, 2.T2, 2.T3

World Geography and Ancient Civilizations II: 7.T2, 7.T2a, 7.T2b

World History 1: WHI.T3, WHI.T5

World History II: WHII.T3, WHII.T4, WHII.T5, WHII.T6