

Music in the Marketplace

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Summary

In this unit, students will examine the dynamic nature of the marketplace in China, paying particular attention to sound, rhythm, and timbre. While they delve into the sounds of the Chinese marketplace, they will also be examining commerce in their own neighborhood, comparing and contrasting effective sales techniques, quality products, and aesthetic elements. The performance task assessment asks students to choose a product and compose an original soundscape to accompany the presentation of this product. Students will then participate in a mini-marketplace in order to determine the effectiveness of their soundscape and sales plan. As students progress throughout the unit, they will gain understanding of the elements of the market in Chinese culture, the variety of needs and opinions within a small cross-section of the population, and the sense of community and solidarity that is often on display in public areas.

Grade Levels

This unit is intended for 8th grade students and is written with the typical general music class in mind, where students attend music once per week for an hour. This unit could be taught in conjunction with a language arts teacher or a visual arts teacher.

Background

In many neighborhoods in China, the marketplace is a flurry of activity. The sounds are a cacophony of conflicting interests, with many vendors attempting to attract the attention of each and every customer walking by their wares. Many vendors use visual displays, but oftentimes, an aural element is often added to attract the attention of customers, even if they are not yet in sight.

Students involved in this project will experience the sights and sounds of the marketplace through a variety of videos and pictures I took throughout the marketplaces in the various cities we visited. In Beijing, the Wangfujing night market's crowded aisles attracted customers through a panoply of fascinating sights, including squirming scorpions on sticks and an unmatched perseverance for bargaining. The Xi'an Muslim Quarter's penchant for rhythmically pounding sweets attracted a crowd at every corner. The neighborhood markets in Shanghai and Beijing provided the local feel, as vendors relied on beautiful and colorful displays of fruits, vegetables, and seafood to lure customers. The antique market in Beijing provided yet another experience, as the goods varied from food, to jewelry, to musical instruments.

After listening to recordings, watching videos, and looking at pictures, students will sense the liveliness and vibrancy of the Chinese marketplace. Through this understanding, they will come to know a vital aspect of Chinese culture: the sense of community inherent in the public spaces of the cities and neighborhoods that make up this vast country.

Primary Content Standards

National Core Arts Standards:

- MU:Cr2.1.8a-Select, organize, and document personal musical ideas for arrangements, songs, and compositions within expanded forms that demonstrate tension and release, unity and variety, balance, and convey expressive intent.
- MU:Pr4.2.8c-Identify how cultural and historical context inform performance and results in different musical effects.

Illinois Fine Arts Standards:

- IL25A.I.- Explain how sensory elements, organizational principles, and expressive qualities are combined to produce unity/variety, tension/release, and balance in a musical performance.
- IL26A.H.6- 6. Critique the effectiveness (e.g., style, interpretation, instrumentation) of a performer or conductor.

Essential Questions

Students will keep considering.....

- Why do people choose one product over another?
- Does music impact commerce?
- How do people around the world use music in daily life?

Enduring Understandings

Students will understand that...

- Sales tactics and sensory elements greatly impact the popularity of a product on any given day
- Understanding connections to varied contexts and daily life enhances musicians' creating, performing, and responding

Materials

- Powerpoint with videos and audio of Chinese marketplaces
- Classroom instruments (optional)

Learning Plan

Lesson 1: Day-to-Day Sounds Around the World

Objectives:

Students will....

- Demonstrate understanding of the variety of marketplaces in China and in their own neighborhood

- Describe the soundscape of a particular place in their neighborhood and compare it to recordings from a marketplace in China

Activities:

- Frame the lesson with the Essential Question, “Does music impact commerce?” Use a graphic organizer or note catcher (T-chart, KWL, etc.) to brainstorm students’ thoughts on this question.
- Listen to the three Audio Examples on the Powerpoint and have students take note of the sounds they hear with regard to the type (voice, instrument, sound) dynamic level, and timbre. Use a three column chart (**see Appendix A**) for this activity
- Discuss their answers, listening carefully for words that describe the timbre and dynamic level. See **Appendix B** for sample answers.
- Have students brainstorm places in their neighborhood where people buy food on at least a weekly basis. In pairs, they will choose one of these places and describe the soundscape of that store, marketplace, or food cart (Use the chart from **Appendix A**). Have a few pairs of students share their answers with the class.
- Have students create the soundscape (as a class) of one of the places they described from their neighborhood. Record the soundscape (10 to 15 second) and play it back for students. Discuss the layers, timbre, dynamics, and sound types. Revise the soundscape to add more layers, take away a layer, or change the dynamics to see how these changes impact the overall effect. Add classroom instruments or other objects if desired to simulate sounds.

Assessment:

- Exit Slip: How does the marketplace at which you frequently shop compare with the marketplace you heard in China? Use the musical elements *dynamics* and *timbre* in your response.

Lesson 2: Point of View and Aesthetics

Objectives:

Students will....

- Describe the variety of aesthetic ideas present in different shopping venues
- Consider multiple points of view (cultural, gender, age, etc.) when examining a product or advertisement

Activities:

- Frame the lesson by reviewing the different soundscapes from the previous lesson. Ask students:
 - What biases do you bring with you when you listen to sounds and music?
- Take 3 minutes and do a “Think-Pair-Share” on the following topic:
 - When and where do you hear music throughout your day?
- How might this change if you were 10 years older? 20 years older?

- How might this change if you were in Florida? Canada? England? China?
- How might this change if you were of the opposite gender?
- Discuss Lesson Objective #2 with students and explain that they are going to be examining products and/or advertisements through different lenses.
- Divide students into groups of 3-4. Each group receives a set of questions, one of three different pictures, and a different “lens” (**See Appendix C**). After 15 minutes, groups share their work.
- As a class, choose one advertisement and one lens to create a soundscape that targets the desired audience

Lesson 3: Community & Daily Life

Objectives:

Students will...

- Compare their community to the Chinese community
- Evaluate the solidarity of their community
- Explain how music and the arts have a role in the life of communities around the world

Activities:

- Show students the pictures and videos from the public parks in China (see Powerpoint slides #23-31). Use the guiding questions on the slides to discuss similarities and differences between the pictures on the slides and students’ own community. Use a Venn diagram to aid students’ thinking if desired.
- Write a narrative describing a typical weekend day in the life of your community. How do the arts and/or music play a part in the community?

Lesson 4: The Sales Pitch

Objectives:

Students will...

- Describe the methods used to attract customers in a given situation and critique the effectiveness of those methods

Activities:

- Show students the 4 videos/pictures (slides 32-35). After discussion (which methods are the most effective) have students work in small groups (3-4 students) to choose one of the four videos/pictures and improve the scenario with either a new sales tactic, a soundscape, or a new display of visual appeal

Performance Task Assessment

After at least 4 weeks, students should begin to look at the Performance Task (see **Appendix D**).

Extension Idea

- Students could create a variety of Chinese arts and crafts in conjunction with their visual arts instruction (for example, Chinese paper cutting or calligraphy) to sell at the mini-marketplace, instead of a pre-existing product

Appendix A

	Dynamic Level (Volume)	Timbre	Type
Recording #1			
Recording #2			
Recording #3			

Appendix B

	Dynamic Level (Volume)	Timbre	Type
Recording #1	Forte (loud); Piano (soft)-ambient background noise, piano; Mezzo forte (moderately loud)-pounding	Metallic, percussive	Voice in a microphone, something wooden pounding
Recording #2	Piano (soft);	Mechanical, whirring sound	Some kind of machinery
Recording #3	Mezzo forte (moderately loud);	Percussive (back beat of the radio); reedy (woodwind sound at the beginning of the piece)	Radio (voice and instrumental), ambient background noise

Appendix C:

Print and cut each group onto a different sheet of paper. Give students a picture or digital image of their advertisement.

Group 1:

Your Lens: 25-year-old Chinese female

Your product: Giordano advertisement

Answer the following questions (from the Powerpoint):

- Do I want this product? Why or why not?
- What aesthetic devices are being used to appeal to me?
- Would I see this advertisement/product in a place where I usually go?

Group 2:

Your Lens: 25-year-old Chinese male

Your product: Giordano advertisement

Answer the following questions (from the Powerpoint):

- Do I want this product? Why or why not?
- What aesthetic devices are being used to appeal to me?
- Would I see this advertisement/product in a place where I usually go?

Group 3:

Your Lens: 65-year-old America male

Your product: Giordano advertisement

Answer the following questions (from the Powerpoint):

- Do I want this product? Why or why not?
- What aesthetic devices are being used to appeal to me?
- Would I see this advertisement/product in a place where I usually go?

Group 4:

Your Lens: 12-year-old Chinese female

Your product: Old Navy advertisement

Answer the following questions (from the Powerpoint):

- Do I want this product? Why or why not?
- What aesthetic devices are being used to appeal to me?
- Would I see this advertisement/product in a place where I usually go?

Group 5:

Your Lens: 18-year-old Chinese male

Your product: Old Navy advertisement

Answer the following questions (from the Powerpoint):

- Do I want this product? Why or why not?
- What aesthetic devices are being used to appeal to me?
- Would I see this advertisement/product in a place where I usually go?

Group 6:

Your Lens: 6-year-old America female

Your product: Old Navy advertisement

Answer the following questions (from the Powerpoint):

- Do I want this product? Why or why not?
- What aesthetic devices are being used to appeal to me?
- Would I see this advertisement/product in a place where I usually go?

Group 7:

Your Lens: 10-year-old Chinese male

Your product: Pringles advertisement

Answer the following questions (from the Powerpoint):

- Do I want this product? Why or why not?
- What aesthetic devices are being used to appeal to me?
- Would I see this advertisement/product in a place where I usually go?

Group 8:

Your Lens: 10-year-old America male

Your product: Old Navy advertisement

Answer the following questions (from the Powerpoint):

- Do I want this product? Why or why not?
- What aesthetic devices are being used to appeal to me?
- Would I see this advertisement/product in a place where I usually go?

Group 9:

Your Lens: 22-year-old America female

Your product: Old Navy advertisement

Answer the following questions (from the Powerpoint):

- Do I want this product? Why or why not?
- What aesthetic devices are being used to appeal to me?
- Would I see this advertisement/product in a place where I usually go?

Appendix D

Performance Task

You are the son/daughter of a vendor in a marketplace. Your family has been in same place in the marketplace for years now and has decided it is time to upgrade the business strategy in order to reach new customers and make more money. Your goal is to create or choose a product that appeals to a new target audience and design a soundscape that will bring in that target audience. A successful result will consider dynamics, timbre, and visual appeal (aesthetics) for the target audience.

Notes about the performance task:

Depending upon the level of the students, they may or may not be able to completely write out notation for their soundscape. In this instance, iconic notation (or invented notation) would be the most appropriate.