

NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF SINGAPORE
Examination For The Degree of B.A.
(Semester II: 2012-2013)

CHINESE STUDIES

GEK1053 Chinese Music, Language and Literature
中国音乐、语言与文学

4 May 2013 (Saturday) 9:00 AM - Time Allowed 2 Hours

INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES

This is an open-book exam. There are seven questions in this paper, and you are required to answer **all** seven questions. The questions are worth 100% in total. Every question demands a short essay-type answer. Try and be succinct with your responses and write no more than 250 words for each answer. You may organise your answers into point format (though note that you would still need to provide complete sentences!). Do not quote *verbatim* from materials used in lectures and tutorials.

NOTE: As you answer each and every one of the questions in this exam paper, try and incorporate as many of the kinds of associated linguistic, literary and/or musical arguments and evidence presented in this module as you can, from the perspective of musicking.

(1) Recall Professor Yung's guest lecture and consider the following examples of Mandarin pop (*shidaiqu* 时代曲) song lyrics in Shanghai in the 1930s which he presented:

Night Shanghai, night Shanghai,
A city that never sleeps,
Neon lights glowing,
Car horns blaring,
Singing and dancing in blissful oblivion.
Look at her –
Smiling face so welcoming,
Who knows her sorrow and frustration?
Leading a night life,
Paying for clothing, food, and housing,
Getting drunk without alcohol,
Wasting youth recklessly.
Dawn arriving brings drowsiness,
Eyes heavy with sleep.
Everyone leaving for home,
The heart churning with the turning wheels
Making a change to a new world,
Getting to a new environment,
Pondering the life of nights gone by,
As if waking from a dream.

That intoxicating lipstick,
Like a rainbow after a shower.
How captivating! How enticing!
How intoxicating!
That intoxicating lipstick,
Like a spring breeze on a wintry night.
How warm! How soft!
How sensuous!
Why is it that we only meet tonight?
Tonight I am stirred for the first time,
That red lipstick firmly imprinted in my mind.
That intoxicating lipstick!
That intoxicating lipstick!

Discuss Chinese musicking as attested by these particular song lyrics in this performing genre. (15%)

(2) Recall Benjamin Lim's guest lecture and the notion of *xi xue zhong yong* 西學中用 lit. 'learn from the west, apply to China/the Chinese' . How is this notion relevant to Chinese musicking in Singapore at all? (15%)

(3) The Canadian pop diva, Celine Dion, performed the Chinese folk song, “The Jasmine Flower” (茉莉花) in Chinese on Chinese state TV, CCTV, as part of its 2013 New Year Gala show (春节联欢晚会) welcoming in the Lunar New Year. It was televised to millions of viewers across China and the fact that Dion doesn’t actually speak Chinese made it a particularly interesting occasion. How is this performance an example of “Chinese” musicking? (15%)

(4) How is Chinese musicking in Taiwan a “microcosm of China and Chinese culture”? Tackle this question from the following perspectives: (a) influence of foreign languages and their music(s) over songs in Taiwan; and (b) the role of Chinese (non-Mandarin) dialects and its place in songs in Taiwan, as opposed to the role of Chinese (Mandarin) language in songs in Taiwan. (15%)

(5) Recall Professor Lam’s guest lecture on Chinese Poetry Chanting. What is the difference between “chanting” as we know it in the west and “chanting” in the tradition of Chinese musicking? (15%)

(6) Discuss how the *guqin* (the seven-string zither) and Chinese musicking which revolves around it demonstrate the non-universality of “silence” as we know it in English. (15%)

(7) Describe the cultural significance of bells (*zhong* 钟 and *ling* 铃) in the context of traditional Chinese musicking, making use of at least some of the linguistic and literary evidence presented in the module. (10%)