

# TELLING THE STORY WITH MUSIC

## *The Internationale*

### AT TIANANMEN SQUARE

By Joanna T. Pecore, Ken Schweitzer and Yang Fan

This season (spring 1999) marks the ten-year anniversary of the student protests-turned-massacre in Beijing's Tiananmen Square. While many print and multimedia materials have been produced to help educators teach about the various aspects of this event, few explore its musical dimensions. Indeed, the true power of music during the demonstrations can only be relayed by one of its participants.

It was our good fortune to discover one such individual in our own classroom! Thanks to Yang Fan, we now have a personal account of the power of music at Tiananmen Square. Since 1997, Fan's story has offered an "insider's view" into this devastating occurrence to more than one thousand undergraduates at the University of Maryland at College Park.

From the beginning of the peaceful rallies, music fused the will and strengthened the determination of protesters. Footage shows participants strumming their guitars and singing familiar tunes together. What is less well documented, however, is the protesters' plea for the government to "practice what they preach" through the performance of nationalistic songs. *The Internationale*, a Communist anthem, declares, "We will clean all the unfairness and the sun will shine on our country."<sup>1</sup>

Yang Fan's account makes it difficult for us to deny the impact of singing *The Internationale* during the spring of 1989. He tells us, "The seriousness of the song reminded us of our responsibility,"



The Goddess of Democracy versus chairman Mao.  
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and "It encouraged us to stand up to the highest authority in China." Singing *The Internationale* with other university students helped Fan realize that, "I was ready to die for the great cause." He concludes, "At that instant [when the song superseded all sound on the Square], I grew up and became a man."

Yang Fan's essay, "The Power of *The Internationale*," reveals the undeniable connections among music, politics, and history. His personal account brought these relationships to life for our students at the University of Maryland, illustrating the wealth and breadth of information contained in anthems. By tracing the global movement of a single song, our lesson shows how these rela-

tionships uncover a history of the exchange and adaptation of ideologies and musical idioms. *The Internationale*, as it was sung in Tiananmen Square in the spring of 1989, is inextricably linked to the development of labor movements, socialism, and communism around the world. Exploring this history helped our students learn why such a European-sounding song has become a standard in the musical repertoire of the average Chinese citizen.

Yang Fan's story is the core of this article and lesson. We present it in the spirit of Clifford's "cultural poetics." By focusing on a personal voice, it challenges analyses that treat history as mere texts or objects. Fan's voice represents one of the many that "clamor for expression" in the shaping of history. While Fan's memory of what happened may differ somewhat from the reports of others, we guard against the pitfalls of accepting one man's story as the truth through a "specification of discourse." That is, both article and lesson offer clear answers to the situational questions: Who speaks? Who writes? When? Where? With or to whom? Under what institutional and historical constraints?<sup>2</sup>

Our intent, then, is not historical "accuracy" in the traditional sense of the word. To tamper with a personal story describing such a grave event would both defeat the purpose of this lesson and be presumptuous. Rather, we focus on the expression of personal experience as a means toward demonstrating the

AS THE RAIN BEGAN TO POUND, THE SOUND OF *The Internationale* OVERTOOK THE SQUARE.

THEN, ACCORDING TO YANG FAN, THE “MAGIC” HAPPENED.

THE STRENGTH OF THE SINGERS SURPASSED THE FORCES OF NATURE.

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natural and seamless interconnections among history, politics, and music. With these goals in mind, we intentionally preserve Yang Fan’s actual words, however clumsy they may be at times, to a native speaker of English.

Our lesson plan (which also may be implemented with high school students), along with Yang Fan’s original essay and his translation of the lyrics of *The Internationale*, follows this explanatory article. We have added some ideas for “companion lessons” to illustrate how our lesson might be expanded or used as an introductory activity to larger units focusing on various themes related to the 1989 protests in Tiananmen Square.

### POLITICS, MUSIC AND *The Internationale* AT TIANANMEN SQUARE

Music can play a variety of roles in politics, including mobilizing groups of people, enculturation, and serving as a tool for the expression of political views. When voicing particularly revolutionary views, this expression may be achieved through repudiation, or hiding a controversial message behind politically sanctioned statements. Yang Fan’s concise essay reveals the multiple political dimensions of *The Internationale* and how its meaning changes through the course of time on both national and personal levels.

The ability of music to act as a unifying force is widely accepted and well documented. For example, the film, *We Shall Overcome: The Song That Moved a Nation*, presents the role of music in unifying protesters during the American Labor movement of the 1940s and 1950s and the American Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s. Compelling reflections, like those of Jamila Jones, attest to music’s part in solidifying and empowering communal efforts. She recalls a response to her activist group’s singing of *We Shall Overcome* when law enforcement officials came to break up their meeting. She says, “It unnerved them [the officials]. It just seemed like nature came into that room. The water on the outside and even the trees just picked

up and we were just a part of that nature in tune with what was happening.”<sup>3</sup>

Though stories like this one reveal the effects of music, they rarely explore how music is able to fulfill this role. Insight into this process is offered by Herndon and McCleod, who draw upon the literature on ritual in *Music As Culture*. Noting that ritual is a common response to anxiety in societies throughout the world, the authors discuss the state of *communitas*. In this condition, individuals lose direct consciousness of self and move into a temporary unity with others. This change of consciousness may be partially attributed to the highly patterned behavior that typifies ritual. Herndon and McCleod point to both music’s role in these behaviors and music’s commonalities with them.<sup>4</sup> Similarly, McNeill describes the movement of groups of people in highly patterned ways in *Keeping Together in Time: Dance and Drill in Human History*. He concludes that movement in unison can create a “blurring of self-awareness and a heightening of fellow feeling with all who share in a dance or drill.”<sup>5</sup> The role of music in dance and drill is obvious. Further, music itself may be viewed as rhythmic movement.

Yang Fan describes the effect of hearing and singing *The Internationale* in Tiananmen Square. He says, “It brought few thousands of people together from their differences.” His account reveals music’s power to promote social solidarity. He traces his transformation from being a single activist to becoming a part of a collective whole. The phases of Fan’s transformation parallel the alterations in the musical, natural, and emotional surroundings. Initially, the quiet singing of just a few people served as a gentle suggestion for others to reconsider the meaning of *The Internationale*. The sky became overcast. As the number of singers increased, so did the volume and force behind the song. It came to represent the determination of the protesters. This determination was intensified by their refusal to take cover from an oncoming downpour. As the rain

began to pound, the sound of *The Internationale* overtook the Square. Then, according to Yang Fan, the “magic” happened. The strength of the singers surpassed the forces of nature. Fan claims, “Even the rain can be ‘stop’ by our song.”

Contributing to this “magic” was the protesters’ previous experience with *The Internationale*. According to Blacking, music can only express extramusical ideas when participants possess preexisting associations with that music.<sup>6</sup> Therefore, we should not be surprised when Fan tells us that he first learned *The Internationale* in elementary school. Just as singing united the demonstrators in Tiananmen Square in the spring of 1989, singing nationalistic songs in school facilitated a sense of collective identity among students. In the context of a public education fostered by the Communist Party of China, it clearly promotes collective, grass-roots support for the regime: “Raise all the people, we will have to solve the problem. Raise all the people, we must take the lead.” This shared experience provided the people in Tiananmen Square with a core set of common beliefs that they had considered from their childhood days. A “common denominator” of basic ideas imbedded in the song helped the demonstrators to declare their views with confidence.

Yet, Yang Fan indicates in his essay, “I did not understand its [*The Internationale*’s] true meaning until the spring of 1989.” The context of the Tiananmen protests changed the meaning of *The Internationale*. For example, the lyrics refer to a “New World.” Whereas the “New World” of Fan’s childhood was a communist utopia, the “New World” of the spring of 1989 was predicated upon the ideals of the student pro-democracy movement. Although new meaning emerged from the song and accusations of hypocrisy reached the ears of Party leaders, the students themselves were shielded from charges of subversion. In fact, nothing on the surface of the song (i.e., lyrics, melody, rhythm) had changed. Only the interpretation of the song had changed. Consequently, the students could repudiate, or deny



Students hold aloft a banner calling for “Freedom & Democracy Enlightenment” on the martyrs monument in Tiananmen Square festooned with a great portrait of Hu Yaobang (April 19, 1989). © China News Digest, a community-based free news/info service provided by volunteers.

and defend, their musical critique as a patriotic act! In fact, students passed through police lines, and soldiers of the People’s Liberation Army refrained from firing at them as a result of the variable message conveyed by their singing.

### HISTORY, CONTEXT, AND MUSIC Global Musical Connections

Clearly, the power of music is multifaceted. One of its most interesting dimensions is the ability of a single melody to simultaneously express several meanings. In Tiananmen Square, students who had accepted the pro-communist sentiments of *The Internationale* as children added new meaning to the song by associating it with their pro-democracy movement.

In fact, the students of China were not the first to reinterpret *The Internationale*. Dating back to the nineteenth century, *The Internationale*’s origins are foreign to China. Indeed, the melody has been sung and performed in a variety of contexts around the globe. While a song like *The Internationale* has the power to influence and affect the outcomes of events such as the 1989 demonstrations in Tiananmen Square, it is also true that these events leave their mark on the song. A pair of sensitive and patient ears should have little trouble “hearing” the song’s history in a recorded performance.

In the classroom, without providing any information about *The Internationale* or the 1989 rallies in Tiananmen Square, we asked our students to listen to a recording of it from a collection of Chinese conduct songs. Instead of offering a song title, a country of origin, or any type of history, we asked them to use their ears and describe what they heard.

The results were incredible! College freshmen, with little or no musical training, were able to recreate and realize much of *The Internationale*’s history with minimal guidance.

Our students were quick to identify the “voices”—a large choral group, trumpets, drums, and violins—included on the recording. When we asked them to use these observations to speculate about the song’s place of origin, they associated this choral style and instrumentation with European nations like France and Germany. They further supported their guess by pointing out that the lyrics were in a language other than English.

The students soon learned that their ears could in fact tell them much more than they had realized. Their associations were amazingly accurate. Indeed, *The Internationale*’s origins are in Western Europe. In 1871, Eugene Potter, a member of the Paris Commune, wrote the lyrics to the revolutionary song. Several years later, the melody was added by Pierre Degeyter of Lille, France. The song quickly gained popularity among the European Socialists, and by the 1890s, it had become a symbol of the European labor movements. One hundred years before the Tiananmen Square massacre, European workers were singing *The Internationale* at their demonstrations and strikes. Furthermore, the song has a history in the Soviet Union. A song of socialist revolution, *The Internationale* was later introduced to Russia by Lenin, where it became the battle hymn of the Bolshevik Revolution.<sup>7</sup>

Just when we were about to present this history to the class, one student suggested that the song might be Russian.

This led another student to associate the song with a movie soundtrack. Many students agreed that the song bears resemblance to many of the Russian choral tunes selected by Hollywood music producers when making films like *Red October*.

We continued to ask, “What else do you hear in the song? What other images come to mind?” The students returned to their observations about instrumentation. Many students associated the sounds of trumpets and drums with power. Images of trumpets and drums on the ancient battlefields of Europe came to the mind of some. For others, the slow, march-like pace of the music created images of a military parade.

Because bands of the U.S. military perform our patriotic songs like *The Star Spangled Banner* and *Stars and Stripes Forever*, the students proposed that this might be an anthem. One student suggested that it was the Soviet Union’s national anthem. Another student corrected him, indicating that she had watched the Olympics many times as a child, and this was not the national anthem of the Soviet Union. In fact, both of these students were correct! After the Bolsheviks won their revolution, *The Internationale* became the national anthem of the Soviet Union. (Note how meaning of the song is altered in this new context. In addition to fostering social revolution, it took on the overtone of nationalism.) However, in 1943 the Soviet Union joined efforts with the Western democracies to defeat Germany in World War II. The country’s leaders were concerned that the song might hinder cooperation among the Allied Forces, since it was perceived as a symbolic threat to international capitalism. At that time, the USSR dropped *The Internationale* in favor of a new national anthem.<sup>8</sup>

Our students continued to support their assertion that the music is either patriotic or nationalistic by citing the characteristics of a military band, but they still had no way to access the fact that this was a revolutionary song. Therefore, we gave them a new piece of information and read aloud the lyrics to *The Internationale*. Upon hearing the first few lines of the song—“Raise those hungry, cold, and poor slaves. Raise the

poor people of the world. The blood is boiling. We will destroy the Old World”—the students not only identified the revolutionary theme of the song, but realized its connections to a world socialist revolution. The students were confident they had “figured it out” and thought the lesson was over until we declared that the lyrics were not Russian after all.

We then turned their attention toward China by reading Yang Fan’s essay and showing *The Gate of Heavenly Peace* (see Lesson Plan). Once our students realized the importance of *The Internationale* in the lives of Yang Fan and his classmates, we explained how the song arrived in China. In 1923, when China entered the world communist movement, Qu Qiubai translated *The Internationale*. It was introduced to China along with several other songs from the USSR to foster a national transformation to communism. Since then, the patriotic song has been learned and performed by all Chinese citizens.<sup>9</sup>

### HISTORY, CONTEXT, AND MUSIC Beijing, Spring 1989

The actual “beginning” of the protests in Tiananmen Square during the spring of 1989 is difficult to discern. For teachers of world history or Asian Studies, marking that “beginning” for students will vary according to educational objectives and time available to focus on the subject.

For Yang Fan, the story begins on April 15, 1989. When former Party General Secretary Hu Yaobang died of a massive heart attack, students like Yang Fan gathered in Tiananmen Square to commemorate him. At the age of eighteen, Fan was a university student whose life revolved around soccer and math. He admits to thinking very little about politics before this event. Fan’s decision to go to the Square that day was purely social. His friends convinced him to take a break from his studies. When he got to the Square, he was impressed by the other students who were freely expressing their views.

From the middle of April through June, Yang Fan savored this freedom by coming and going to Tiananmen Square and surrounding areas at his leisure. He remembers when he and his friends sat in front of some of the tanks that were positioned some distance from the Square. They did not feel threatened by them. While the soldiers refused to come out of their tanks at first, Fan and his friends socialized and sang together. When the soldiers did come out of their tanks, they were friendly. The students spoke with them, showed them newspapers, and explained that they were working toward making the country a better place for everyone. It was hard for Fan to imagine that this optimism and confidence would lead to a violent crackdown in June.

A number of resources offer an account of the unbelievable turn of

events. In our undergraduate course, time limitations caused us to rely on a quick but powerful overview of the incident presented via video segments and Yang Fan’s personal story. The video, *The Gate of Heavenly Peace*, provided our students with their first glimpse of this reality. The video’s emphasis on stark, still photographic imagery helped us to demonstrate the context of Yang Fan’s experience with *The Internationale* in the spring of 1989. Like music, these chilling images encourage a sensory experience. The sparing use of narration and amplified reproduction of the event’s soundscape also served as an effective complement to our other classroom materials: an audio recording of *The Internationale*, the words of Yang Fan’s story, and his translation of the song’s lyrics.

*The Tragedy at Tiananmen: The Untold Story*, also known as “The Koppel Report,” offered more details about the various events leading up to the massacre. In fact, throughout this video, footage captured choruses of protesters singing *The Internationale*. For example, an attuned viewer can catch a portion of *The Internationale* while students retreat from the Square on June 2 and during the official funeral of Hu Yaobang. It can also be heard later in the video, after a discussion of the April 26 editorial in a Beijing newspaper reprimanding students for their behavior. Finally, it appears again during a report on the events of May 20. Unfortunately, these



Protesters come from all walks of life and all age groups as they march for freedom and democracy in the streets of Beijing (May 23, 1989).

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segments are fleeting, so they do not serve as effective examples of *The Internationale* itself. Instead, students can view them in follow-up activities in order to “witness” the song’s significance in Chinese politics.

Combined with Yang Fan’s story, these resources helped our students experience the effect of a single song on the life of a university student not much different than themselves. *The Internationale* symbolized all that was good in China when Yang Fan was in grade school. When he sang it in Tiananmen Square, it stood for his duty to make his homeland a better place for other people by fighting for freedom and democracy. Living in the United States, far from his home and family, Yang Fan associates *The Internationale* with the freedoms of speech, religion, peaceable assembly, and the right to petition the government. Now, this expanded meaning extends beyond Fan’s vision for China and embraces his vision for the world. ■

#### NOTES

- Lyrics used in this essay are drawn from Yang Fan’s translation of the Chinese lyrics.
- James Clifford, “Introduction: Partial Truths,” *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*. Edited by James Clifford and George E. Marcus. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), 12–15.
- Quoted from *We Shall Overcome: The Song That Moved a Nation*. Produced by Jim Brown, Ginger Brown, and Harold Leventhal. (San Francisco, Calif.: California Newsreel, 1984).
- Marcia Herndon and Norma McCleod, *Music as Culture* (Richmond, Calif.: MRI Press, 1990), 124–125.
- William H. McNeill, *Keeping Together in Time: Dance and Drill in Human History* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1995), 8.
- John Blacking, “The Value of Music in Human Experience,” *Yearbook of the International Folk Music Council* (1969), 39.
- Isabel K. F. Wong, “Geming Gequ: Songs for the Education of the Masses,” *Popular Chinese Literature and Performing Arts in the People’s Republic of China, 1949–1979*. Edited by Bonnie S. McDougall (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 119.
- Paul Nettl, *National Anthems*. Translated by Alexander Gode (New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing Co., 1967), 130–131.
- Richard Curt Kraus, *Pianos and Politics in China: Middle-Class Ambitions and the Struggle Over Western Music* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 173.

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#### DISCOGRAPHY

*(Standard) Collection of Conduct Songs*. Produced by Central Broadcasting Company, Television and Recording Division. Beijing: Beijing Culture, Arts, Music and Image Publishing Company. Distributed by Guangdong Province Record Company. Record # Q0201. (We used the fourth track on this recording, a choral version of *The Internationale*, in our class.)

#### VIDEOGRAPHY

*The Gate of Heavenly Peace*. Produced by J. B. Pictures, Ltd., New York: Filmmakers Library, 1989 (10 minutes). (Filmmakers Library, 124 East 40th Street, New York, NY 10016. Phone: 212/808-4980.)

*Tragedy at Tiananmen Square: The Untold Story* (“The Koppel Report”). Northbrook, Ill.: Coronet, 1989 (47 minutes 49 seconds). (Coronet, 420 Academy Drive, Northbrook, IL 60062. Phone: 1-800/621-2131 and 708/940-1260.)

*We Shall Overcome: The Song That Moved a Nation*. Produced by Jim Brown, Ginger Brown, and Harold Leventhal. San Francisco, Calif.: California Newsreel, 1984 (58 minutes). (California Newsreel, 149 Ninth Street/420, San Francisco, CA 94103. Phone: 415/621-6196.)

#### ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

##### ARTICLES

Brace, Tim, and Paul Friedlander. “Rock and Roll on the New Long March: Popular Music, Cultural Identity, and Political Opposition in the People’s Republic of China.” *Rockin’ the Boat: Mass Music and Mass Movements*. Edited by Reebee Garafalo. Boston: South End Press, 1992, 115–127.

Lee, Joanna Ching-Yun. “All for Freedom: The Rise of Patriotic/Pro-Democratic Popular Music in Hong Kong in Response to the Chinese Student Movement.” *Rockin’ the Boat: Mass Music and Mass Movements*, 1992, 129–147.

Wong, Isabel K. F. “Geming Gequ: Songs for the Education of the Masses.” *Popular Chinese Literature and Performing Arts in the People’s Republic of China, 1949–1979*. Edited by Bonnie S. McDougall. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984, 112–143.

##### AUDIO MATERIALS

*Best of Communism: Selection of Revolutionary Songs*. Valogatott Mozgalmi Dalok. Gong, 1997. Made in Hungary. This CD includes a Hungarian version of *The Internationale* that was recorded in 1971. (For more information, go to <http://www.szoborpark.hu/ashop.htm>.)

Bragg, Billy. *The Internationale*. New York: Elektra’s Utility Records, 1990.

The title track of this CD includes original

lyrics written by Billy Bragg soon after the 1989 demonstrations in Tiananmen Square. Pete Seeger asked him to perform the song at the Vancouver Folk Festival at that time. (Available through Utility Records, P.O. Box 2042, Madison Square Station, New York, NY 10059.)

#### BOOKS

*Beijing Spring*. Photographs by David and Peter Turnley. Text by Melinda Liu. Hong Kong: Asia 2000, 1989.

Kraus, Richard Curt. *Pianos and Politics in China: Middle-Class Ambitions and the Struggle Over Western Music*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1989.

Nettl, Paul. *National Anthems*. Translated by Alexander Gode. New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing Co., 1967, 130–131.

Shen Tong. *Almost a Revolution: The Story of a Chinese Student’s Journey from Boyhood to Leadership in Tiananmen Square*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1990.

#### SCORE

Trehane, Bryceson. *National Anthems of the United Nations and Associated Powers*. Boston: Boston Music Co, c. 1943.

#### VIDEO

*Arturo Toscanini Conducting Giuseppe Verdi’s Hymn of the Nations*. Washington, DC: Library of Congress, 1988 (30 minutes). As originally filmed in 1943. In cooperation with the Office of War Information, Toscanini recreates his radio broadcast with the NBC Symphony Orchestra. *The Internationale* appears at the end of the performance. Note that *The Internationale* was cut from the film after the war until this reissue of the film in 1988. (Library of Congress, Motion Picture, Broadcasting & Recording Sound Division, Washington, DC 20540.)

#### WORLD WIDE WEB RESOURCE

*Frontline: The Gate of Heavenly Peace*. [Http://www.nmis.org/gate](http://www.nmis.org/gate).

This website contains a diversity of information related to the film, *The Gate of Heavenly Peace* used in our lesson on *The Internationale*. The homepage leads to clips from the film, a transcript of the film, a photo gallery, audio clips, a look at the Democracy Wall, suggestions for further reading, and a chronology of events related to the 1989 Tiananmen demonstrations. For more on music and the pro-democracy movement, click on “Essay” under “Audio Clips” under “The Film” (<http://www.nmis.org/gate/film/music.html>). A transcript of Deng Xiaoping’s June 9, 1989 speech declaring martial law is also posted on-line (<http://www.nmis.org/gate/chronology/Deng.html>).

#### Note on the source for the photos in this article

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You will find hundreds of photos divided into three categories: “Massacre” series, “Demonstration” series (5/20/89–6/3/89) and “CSS” series (overseas Chinese Students and Scholars). Site address: [Http://www.cnd.org](http://www.cnd.org).

# Telling the Story With Music

## The *Internationale* at Tiananmen Square Lesson Plan

We have presented this background and narrative of teaching with *The Internationale* for teachers. In fact, we recommend *not* providing this information to your students prior to asking them to listen to *The Internationale*. Instead, the teacher should guide students through discovering the many dimensions of *The Internationale* at Tiananmen Square themselves. We have repeatedly implemented the plan that follows. Students have been successful in drawing out the multiple meanings of *The Internationale*.

### Lesson Plan

#### OBJECTIVES

- To offer students a chance to come closer to the experience of student protesters in Tiananmen Square
- To help students discover the connections among music, politics, and history
- To explore the symbolic power of music and people's roles in determining the meaning of those symbols

#### STRATEGIES

- Listen to and consider one student's memory of a song he sang with his friends in Tiananmen Square
- Listen to *The Internationale* to explore its changing meaning over time and space
- Analyze the subtleties of music's power to persuade, mobilize, and symbolize

#### MATERIALS

- Audio recording of Chinese version of *The Internationale*
- English version of lyrics of *The Internationale*
- Synopsis of a history of *The Internationale* (derived from Global Connections section above)
- Copy of Yang Fan's essay
- Background information describing events in Tiananmen Square during the spring of 1989
- Video: *The Gate of Heavenly Peace*
- Video: *Tragedy at Tiananmen: The Untold Story*

#### BEFORE CLASS

- Write the following on the board:

MUSICAL SOUNDS	IMAGES

#### PROCEDURE

1. Ask students to take out a piece of paper. They should make two columns just like those written on the board.
2. Tell them that they will be listening to a piece of music. As they listen they should write down whatever thoughts and reactions come to mind. (Refer to Global Connections section above.) This can be a description of the music they hear. Those notes should be written in the first column; for example, "string instruments," "steady pace," etc. Remind students to pay attention to how the sound changes throughout the course of the song. They should note these changes as well. Thoughts and reactions that come to mind might also be images. Examples include a setting that comes to mind, clothes people are wearing in that setting, what people are doing in that setting, etc. These thoughts should be noted in the second column.
3. Play the Chinese version of *The Internationale*.
4. Ask students to contribute what they have written on their paper to the class. Write comments on the board in the appropriate column. Once all of the possibilities have been shared, move on to step #5.

5. Show students how much information they extracted from the song by merely listening to it. Summarize the history of *The Internationale*.
6. Tell the students you will give them another piece of information about the song. Read Yang Fan's translation of the Chinese lyrics to the class.
7. Ask students, What is/are the message(s)? Ask students if they would like to modify the list they put on the board after having heard the lyrics.
8. Explain that you would like to introduce a *particular* context in which the song was "performed." Show *The Gate of Heavenly Peace*. This step makes students realize that the song is in Chinese and explains the reason for the language. (We do not play the video from the very beginning in order to have students more slowly "enter" the context. That is, we skip the introduction that clearly identifies the Tiananmen Square event. We begin at the "still" 2'20" into the tape where there is a man's face in front of a banner. Only two Chinese characters 中国 are visible.)
9. Read Yang Fan's essay to the class.
10. Discuss: According to Yang Fan's essay, what effect did the sound of, and then joining the singing of, *The Internationale* have on the participants of the Tiananmen protest?
11. Have students listen to *The Internationale* again.
12. Discuss: Is there anything about the sound of the song that might have helped create this effect?
13. If time is available, expand the contextual framework by showing selected segments of *The Tragedy at Tiananmen*.
14. Ask students to consider and speculate about how the surroundings of the protest (excitement, activity, weather, etc.) might have impacted this effect.
15. Ask students, How do you think the police and government officials reacted to the students' singing of *The Internationale*? Speculate about whether they may have seen it as a positive or negative behavior. Explain your answer.
16. Consider the meaning of *The Internationale* in Yang Fan's life.

Discuss:

What did the song symbolize for him before the Tiananmen incident?

What did the song symbolize for him during the Tiananmen incident?

What do you think the song now symbolizes for Yang Fan?

### "COMPANION" LESSON IDEAS

#### (A) SIMULATING THE DILEMMAS OF THE PROTESTERS

- Yang Fan identifies four issues that the students were fighting for: Freedom of Speech, Freedom of Religion, Freedom of Peaceable Assembly, and the Right to Petition the Government. Divide students into four groups corresponding to these issues.
- Have each group research each of the issues in general, and especially in terms of what the students in China were requesting.
- Have each group of students "decide" whether or not they "will participate" in the protests based on their research. Have them issue a statement to the class regarding their "decision" and supporting it with their research.
- Have each student explain how he or she feels about taking part in the protest. (This may or may not coincide with the reasoning behind their decisions.)
- Tell Yang Fan's story about joining the demonstrations. (See Beijing, spring 1989 section above.)
- Link to lesson on *The Internationale*.

(B) HISTORICAL RESEARCH ON  
THE TIANANMEN SQUARE INCIDENT

- If schedule is flexible, instead of “filling in” the details of the Tiananmen incident with the videos recommended here, have students research and present to the class different aspects of the event themselves.
- This may be done in preparation for *The Internationale* lesson suggested here. If so, you may like to have students hold off on their presentations until completing step #7 in the lesson plan above.
- If *The Internationale* lesson is used to “kick-off” a unit on material related to the Tiananmen Square incident, students may begin this research as a “next step” in exploring the incident.

(C) OTHER MUSICAL DIMENSIONS OF  
THE TIANANMEN INCIDENT

- Compare and contrast different “performances” of *The Internationale* and their relationship to history, politics, and context. (See Audio Materials in Resources section below.)
- Explore with students the dimensions of the song used in the background of the movie, *The Gate of Heavenly Peace*. Information is available on the World Wide Web at <http://www.nmis.org/gate/film/music.html>.
- Explore with students the relationship between popular music in Hong Kong and the student demonstrations in Beijing. (See article by Joanna Ching-Yun Lee in Resources section.)

(D) WORLD HISTORY AND POLITICS INVESTIGATION

- Have different groups of students research various aspects of Chinese political history since the spring of 1989.
- Topics could include:
  - Follow-up on student leaders
  - Issues surrounding the death of Deng Xiaoping

*The Internationale*  
Translation of Chinese lyrics by Yang Fan

*Raise those hungry, cold, and poor slaves  
Raise the poor people of the world.  
The blood is boiling.  
We will destroy the Old World.  
Let us stand up, stand up.  
Do not say we have nothing.  
We want to be the owners of the New World.  
Let us blow the revolutionary horn.  
Stand up till tomorrow.  
Raise all the people, we will have to solve the problem.  
Raise all the people, we must take the lead.  
Raise all the people, we need freedom.  
There is never a person who can save us.  
Nor can anyone give us the light of hope.  
If everyone wants happiness,  
We will have to fight for it ourselves.  
We will get our happiness and let the sun shine on us again.  
Let us blow the horn of freedom and stand up till tomorrow.  
Raise all the people, it will happen.  
We will clean all of the unfairness and the sun will shine  
on our country.  
We will get our happiness and let the sun shine on us again.  
Let us blow the horn of freedom and stand up till tomorrow.*

**EDITOR’S NOTE:** The authors requested that the language of Yang Fan’s translated essay not be changed.

*The Power of The Internationale*  
by Yang Fan

I learned to sing *The Internationale* when I was in grade school. I have heard the song thousand of times as I grown up in China. However, I did not understand its true meaning until the Spring of 1989.

I was sitting in the center if Tiananmen Square along with few thousands of Chinese students. I was proud of being part of the world famous pro-democracy movement. It was my third day on the square. The concrete floor was cold. Food was bad. I neither eat nor slept well in those three days. I was cold and tired. I was sitting in Beijing’s cold early morning wind, hoping that we will be able to change the government. We were fighting for the freedom of speech, freedom of religion, the freedom of peaceable assembly and the right to petition the government.

We were exhausted. We were debating if we should stay or go home to get some rest. All of the sudden, it started to rain. Big rain drops pounded on our face. More people leaning towards leave the square and take cover. That is when I heard someone start to sing *The Internationale*. It was very little and low in tone in the beginning. Soon, more people started to sing along. Then the tone of *The Internationale* stopped all other voices. It become the dominate sound on the square. It brought few thousands of young people together from their differences. We were singing in the same rhythm. The seriousness of the song reminded us of our responsibility. It encouraged us to stand up to the highest authority in China. I forgot the cold and uncomfortable environment. I sang along. That is when I realized what kind of responsibilities I have and started to think what I can do to make the country a better place for the rest of the people. I sense the importance of freedom and democracy. Just like many other students on the square, I was ready to die for the great cause. At that instant, I grew up and become a man.

Then the miracle happened. The rain stopped in the sound of *The Internationale*. We won. Even the rain can be “stop” by our song. We cheered for our success and welcome the appearance of the magnificent morning light.

I heard *The Internationale* many times after that morning. It always brings up the memory. I am amazed by the significant power of the song; how it brought thousands of people together and fought for their belief; how it helped me grown; and even how it stopped the rain. The song was very popular through out the movement. It encouraged us to fight for our belief. It calmed us down and gave us dignity even when tanks and bullets were taking away its singers’ lives.

I left China one and a half month later after being shoot at by Peoples Republican Army’s solder. It has been eight years since that morning. Not even for one moment that I forgot the tone of the song. It helps me go through hard time and moving forward. It reminds me of the importance of freedom. ■

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