

CHINESE MUSIC

Pentatonic scale

It is the collective name of five musical scales: do, re, mi, sol and la. All the traditional Chinese scale forms included the said five scales. Various modes might be formed based on each tone that is considered the principal tone in a sequence of music tones consisting of the pentatonic scale. According to the scale names of the principal tones, modes could fall into different categories, such as do-mode, re-mode, mi-mode, sol-mode and la-mode.

friend Zhong Ziqi by Playing the Qin have their roots in this period, which fully reflects the improved musical instrument playing and composing skills and the enhanced music appreciation skills as well. As for playing the ancient *qin*, ancient *qin* players also attributed superb *qin* performance to true and deep feelings. According

to historical records, the singing of famous musician Qin Qing in the Zhou Dynasty could “shock the trees and stop clouds from moving,” and the singing of the folk singer Han E could “linger in the mind for a long time.”

The theory of “12 *lüs*” had come into being in the Zhou Dynasty, and the names of the “Pentatonic scale,” known as *gong*, *shang*, *jue*, *zhi* and *yu*, were established as well. One of the outstanding achievements in the theory of “*lü*” was the “*Sanfen Sunyi*” method recorded in the *Guanzi · Di Yuan*.

The Spring and Autumn Period & the Warring States Period

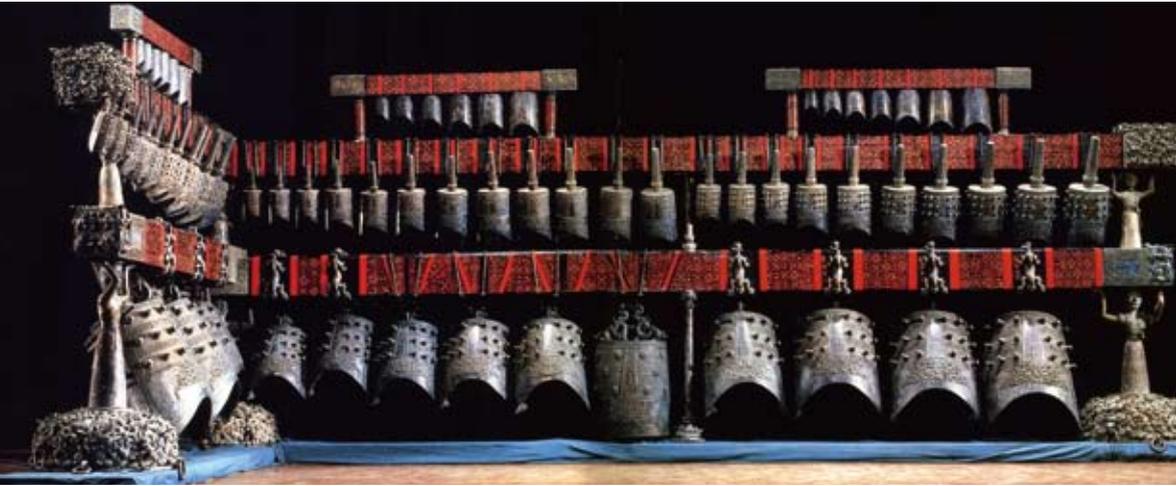
The Spring and Autumn Period (770–476 BC) saw the rise of regional music due to the collapse of such religious and legal system as “passing the throne to the elder son of the legal wife rather than the son of concubines,” and the “fiefdom system,” and destruction of rites. Numerous wars in the Warring States Period also led to frequent collaborations

“Sanfen Sunyi” method

This was one of the ancient Chinese *Lü* generation methods. Guan Zhong in the Spring and Autumn Period invented the Sanfen Sunyi Method that was used to figure out the length of *Lü* for the pentatonic scale. The same or similar *Lü* generation methods also appeared in ancient Greek and Arabic countries. Based on length of the vibrating bodies, the Sanfen Sunyi method included two aspects: “*sanfen sunyi*” and “*sanfen yiyi*.” Cutting one-third from a certain chord meant “*sanfen sunyi*,” which could result in the upper fifth of the chord tone; And increasing the chord by one-third meant “*sanfen yiyi*,” which generated the lower quarter of the chord tone. Alteration and consecutive use of the said two methods would generate all music *lüs* based on the first *lü*. The earliest record of the “*Sanfen Sunyi*” method ever known was in *Guanzi · Di Yuan*, in which there were only five tones; While the records in *Lü’s Spring and Autumn Annals · Yinlü* showed that the method had figured out all the length codes of the 12 *lüs*. The method in which the *Lü* of the upper fifth was calculated based on the sequence of the “*Sanfen Sunyi*” method was called “*xisheng*” in ancient times, and the method in which the lower quarter was calculated was called “*shangsheng*.” Twelve *lüs* was finally generated with five “*xisheng*” *lüs* and six “*shangsheng*” *lüs*.



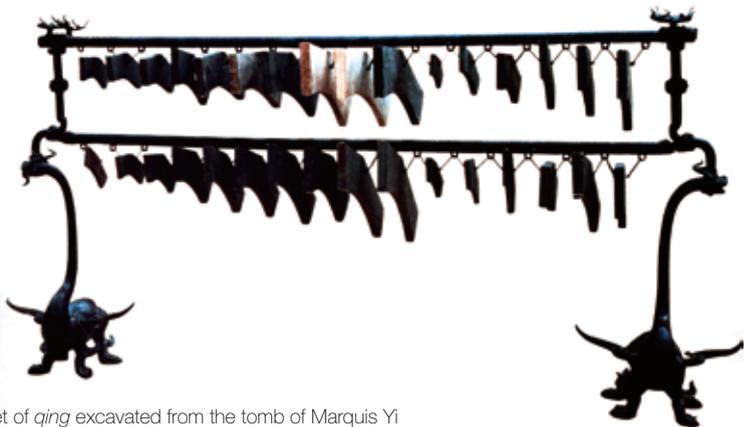
THE EVOLUTION OF CHINESE MUSIC



Chime bells excavated from the tomb of Marquis Yi. The bells standing in the north are 3.35 meters long and 2.73 meters tall; while the bells in the west are 7.48 meters long and 2.65 meters tall.

among various sorts in regional music, and the ancient musical instruments unearthed in 1978 from the tomb of Marquis Yi of the State of Zeng located in Suixian County (present-day Suizhou), Hubei were important evidence of that.

Chinese History, mainly compiled by Guo Moruo, wrote that in the states of Sui and Zeng, there were marquises that had the same family names with marquises in the Zhou Dynasty. The



A set of *qing* excavated from the tomb of Marquis Yi measures 1.09 meters long and 2.15 meters tall.



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Figurines of performers and dancers excavated from a tomb of the Warring States Period in Zhangqiu, Shandong Province, show a grand performance scene.

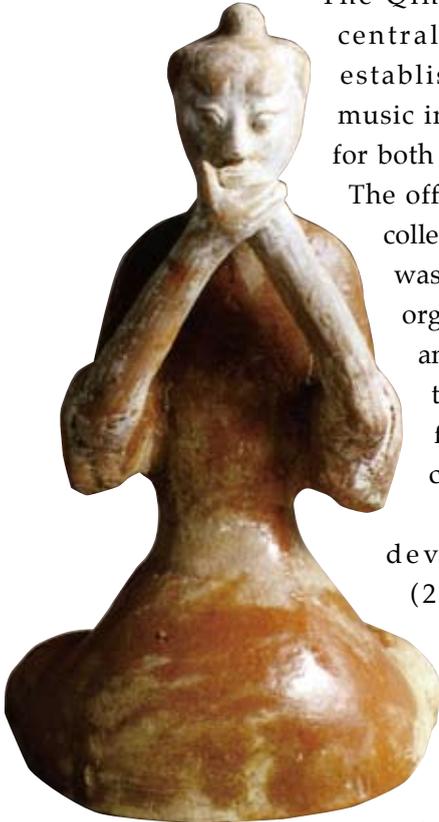
inscriptions on the unearthed bronze *ge* show that marquises of the State of Zeng were formerly from a branch of the King of the Zhou Dynasty. The 65-piece chime bell discovered in the tomb of Marquis Yi is the most complete and biggest bronze chime bell known so far. Chimes appeared as early as the Shang Dynasty, with three to five bells at first, nine to 13 in the Zhou Dynasty and 61 in the Warring States Period. Based on sizes, sounds and ranges, bells were arranged into chimes to play pleasant and melodious music.

The period from the Zhou Dynasty to the Warring States Period saw richer categories of musical instruments, more refined instrument-making skills as well as enhanced requirements on sound quality. The making of musical instruments used in playing “*yayue*,” such as chime bells and chime *qings*, would involve much labor and money. The chime bells unearthed from the tomb of Marquis Yi boasts a wide range of sound of five octaves, only one octave less than the sound range of modern pianos. The bells would produce beautiful and pure sounds when struck, with chords the same as the modern C Major.



Historical records show, the “eight sound” classification method was adopted for musical instruments at this time, which was to classify musical instruments into eight categories based on the materials used to make them: gold (bronze bell and *bo*), stone (stone *qing*), earth (ceramic *xun* and *fou*), leather (*tao* drums), silk (*qin* and *se* with chords made of silk), wood (wooden striking musical instruments like *zhu* and *yu*), *pao* (*sheng* and *yu* made of plants like gourds) and bamboo (*xiao* and *chi*).

The Qin and Han Dynasties



A figure of a *xun* performer in the Western Han Dynasty.

The Qin Dynasty (221–206 BC), as a centralized empire, was the first to establish an official organization—a music institute—for music management for both political and cultural unification.

The official organization, inheriting the collection system in the Zhou Dynasty, was mainly responsible for collecting, organizing and adapting folk music, and arranging a group of musicians to perform in such occasions as feasts, sacrifices and congratulation ceremonies.

The music institute was further developed in the Han Dynasty (206BC–220AD). The Emperor Wudi of the Han Dynasty paid particular attention to folk music and, as a result, expanded the organization and functions of the music institute, and ordered it to collect folk songs of



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Painting of Performing, Singing and Dancing Gods unearthed from a painted coffin from tombs of the Western Han Dynasty at Mawangdui.

ethnic groups in various areas, including Beidi and in remote areas like the western regions. Therefore, music like *Shen Lai Yan Yi* (Entertaining the gods when they came) and *Cheng Xuan Si Long* (Riding on dragons) from *Anshi Fangzhong Yue* (*The Boudoir Poetry of the Peaceful Age*), and *Jiaosi Yue* (*Rural Sacrificial Music*) accompanied by a magnificently-dressed witch who was singing while dancing gracefully in the moonlight, and could be heard

