



MEET THE COMPOSER:

Chen Yi

Age Range:	Elementary, Middle School, High School
Introduction:	Composers write music, just like authors write books. In the Class Notes “Meet the Composer” series, we will learn a little bit about the achievements, backstory, and influences of a variety of composers. Get ready to learn about these influential composers and listen to some of their music.
Total Video Time:	13:12
Total Lesson Time:	Approximately 25-30 minutes

BACKGROUND on Chen Yi

Chen Yi was born in China in 1953. She learned to play several instruments as a young child and became a very good violinist. She also studied composition. She earned several degrees in China then moved to the United States to complete her studies. She is known for blending elements of traditional Chinese music with western classical music. She now lives in Kansas City, Missouri where she continues to compose and teach composition.

MUSIC of Chen Yi

1. Chen Yi has composed a lot of music for wind ensemble, also known as concert band. Her *Suite from China West* is a good example of how she combines elements of Chinese folk music with western classical instrumentation. Here is one *movement*, or section, from that piece.

[Suite from China West. IV. Miao Dances](#). Composed 2007. Video approx. 3.5 minutes.

2. “Yangko” is a traditional Chinese folk dance in which dancers also use drums. In her composition *Yangko*, Chen Yi asks the two percussionists to begin the percussive rhythmic patterns with vocal sounds before moving to various percussion instruments. Over the backdrop of the rhythmic pulse, a violin plays a melody.

[Yangko](#). Composed 2005. Video approx. 5 minutes.

3. Chen Yi has also composed vocal music. This piece for choir is called *Spring Dreams*. The singers sing words from a poem about spring but also make many springtime sounds. As you listen, notice how many sounds of spring you hear.

[Spring Dreams](#). Composed 2012. Video approx. 5 minutes.



MEET THE COMPOSER: **Chen Yi, cont.**

CREATE, CONNECT, & RESPOND to Yi's music

1. Like composers Antonio Vivaldi & Astor Piazzolla, Chen Yi composed a piece of music called *Four Seasons*. Learn more about [Antonio Vivaldi](#) and [Astor Piazzolla](#).
2. The choral piece *Spring Dreams* is composed for a full choir that includes each voice type. Learn more in the Class Notes Lesson [What are VOICE TYPES?](#)

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FAST FACTS

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