



The Interdisciplinary Context

OVERVIEW

Exploring the context of a piece of music beyond its musical elements makes the work more relevant to students. Understanding the interdisciplinary facets can capture students' imaginations, generate new perspectives about the music, and lead to performances that more clearly express the composer's musical thoughts and intentions. [The Facets Model](#), the essential framework for ChoralQuest® curricula, encourages learning the context of music and its non-musical aspects in addition to the vocal and technical skills needed to perform the work.

Two essential from the Facets Model that relate to the context of the music are:

- “What is its subject?”
- “What is being expressed?”

The subject of *Thinking of My Home* flows from the gentle and beautiful lyrics of an ancient poem by Li Bai, a highly revered Chinese poet from the Tang Dynasty (618–907 C.E.). Though the poem was written over 14 centuries ago, it is still taught to children in present-day China. The reflective mood and uplifting melodies of the song focus on the beauty of the night and a wistful longing for a home faraway.

In addition to focusing on the poetry at the root of the piece, a second topic is addressed in the interdisciplinary lessons; Chen Yi's place in history. She was 13 years old at the beginning of the Chinese Cultural Revolution. Her parents, both doctors, lost most of their possessions, their home, and their livelihood. Chen Yi was sent to the country to do common labor, pulled away from all that she knew including her musical studies. As students look at the composer through the lens of these historical events, they will have a better sense of the mood of the music and why there are traditional Chinese elements woven into the piece.

THE LESSON PLANS

- Chen Yi and the Chinese Cultural Revolution
- Li Bai and His Beloved Poem
- Connecting the Threads of History, Poetry, and Song

Using some or all of these resources will help students understand the music in a holistic way as they respond to and interpret *Thinking of My Home*. Lesson segments can be interspersed within the rehearsal and teaching plans in class, or assigned as individual projects, homework, or extended assignments.