

GONG XI GONG XI

Chen Gexin (Arr Owain Gethin Davies)



ABOUT THIS SONG

Gong Xi Gong Xi is a song associated with Chinese New Year – it welcomes the arrival of spring and new year. Gong Xi means best wishes or congratulations in Mandarin. The final lines of this song replicate the typical beat of the Chinese drum.

THEMES/SUBJECTS

Celebration / world / heritage

CURRICULUM KEY LINKS

Languages, Literacy & Communication
Humanities
Expressive Arts

DISCIPLINE-SPECIFIC CONSIDERATIONS

Vocal range

A 9th

Vocal format

Verse and Chorus

Musical elements

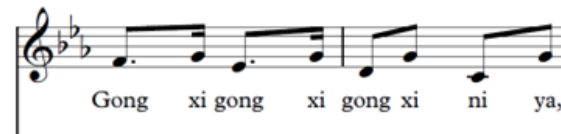
Unison, Beat, Rhythm

Musical characteristics

Simple verse and chorus structure.
Dotted and straight rhythms.
Tuned percussion accompaniment.

Warm-up Exercises

- Move your stomach muscles in and out without breathing. This makes learners very aware of the movement required when they breathe. Then breathe in for four beats, feeling the ribs expanding outwards, and out for four beats, keeping the ribs engaged for as long as possible.
- Balance on one leg and rotate the other leg in a circular motion, starting with the ankles, then the knees and finally the hip. Do this clockwise and then anticlockwise. Repeat with the other leg.
- Sing part of the C Minor scale (C D Eb F G), ascending and descending, to the numbers 1 to 5. Replace one of the numbers with a silence and try to perform. Gradually, replace more numbers with a silence.
- Demonstrate the characteristic rhythm of the song, and ask learners to clap/say the rhythm.



Suggested key links with other Areas, cross-cutting themes &/or local, national and international contexts

- There are many customs and traditions that take place when celebrating Chinese New Year. Find out more about them and compare these with New Year traditions in Wales e.g. Y Fari Lwyd.
- In China, each year is dedicated to one of 12 zodiac animals. This means that every 12 years the cycle repeats itself returning to the first animal on the list. The story is based on the story of 'The Great Race'. Discover which animals feature in the story and which years they represent.
- Many festivals in China, and indeed across the world, originate from legends and myths. One of the most popular Chinese New Year tales is about the mythical beast called Nian. Find out more about this story. Are there any Welsh myths and legends that have mythical beasts? How are they similar and different?

GRADING: CHALLENGING

GONG XI GONG XI

Chen Gexin (Arr Owain Gethin Davies)



Teaching and Learning

- 1 Listen to the piece all the way through. Ask the children what they notice about the piece. (One voice, repeating verse and chorus.)
- 2 Listen to Verse 1 and chorus again. Teach the words and rhythm of the chorus by using the 'I Say, You Say' technique, saying the words in rhythm, line by line.
- 3 Two different rhythms can be heard in the chorus. The first bar has a dotted rhythm – watch for the change of rhythm in the second bar in the chorus. Clap the two rhythms and ask children to clap them back. Repeat this aloud with the words.

Gong xi, gong xi, gong xi ni ya | Gong xi, gong xi, gong xi ni

- 4 Next, learn the melody of the chorus using the 'I Sing, You Sing' technique or by playing the track on the screen, pause and toggle back to repeat for the children to join in.
- 5 Once confident, go back to the verse and learn each line at a time to the rhythm using the 'I Say, You Say' technique. A phonetic copy of the words is available to download. Once confident with the rhythm learn the melody line by line, using the 'I Sing, You Sing' technique.
- 6 Return to the beginning of Verse 1 and sing the verse and chorus through with the full track. Repeat a few times until confident.
- 7 The other verses have the same melody. Learn each one using the 'I Say, You Say' technique, before singing along with the track. This may take more than one session. Use the phonetic sheet to help with the pronunciation if required.
- 8 Once the whole song has been learnt, sing it through together a number of times until confident.

Integral Skills

- Listen again to the song, the verse and chorus pattern repeats a number of times. Can children make their performance more interesting by adding dynamics? Ask children to decide how to sing each verse and chorus, adding interest through changes in their dynamics.
- The phrase 'Gong xi, Gong xi' means 'best wishes'. When saying this phrase during the Chinese New Year, it is usually accompanied by a specific bow. Make a fist with one hand and place it in the centre of your chest. Cover your fist with your other hand. In this position, bow to someone to the left or right side of you. Perform the song, adding the bowing during the chorus.
- The song is in the key of C minor. And there are 3 basic chords used throughout the piece – Cmin, F and G. Using the score, look at the base notes of the piece (in the piano accompaniment). Can children find and identify the base line? Using tuned instruments, can they add the C, F or G bass notes in the right places to accompany the song?

GRADING: CHALLENGING

GONG XI GONG XI

Chen Gexin (Arr Owain Gethin Davies)



Statements of what matters:

- *Exploring the expressive arts is essential to developing artistic skills and knowledge and it enables learners to become curious and creative individual*
- *Creating combines skills and knowledge, drawing on the senses, inspiration and imagination*

- Gong Xi Gong Xi is a Chinese New Year song. Learn other songs from different countries and other language that celebrate a new year e.g. Auld Lang Syne, Y Calennig. Compare them with each other. Do they have any similar themes?
- The accompaniment for Gong Xi includes the addition of instruments such as Glockenspiel, Alto Xylophone and Acoustic Guitar. Can children follow the score and play these instruments accompanying their classmates?
- The phrase 'Gong xi ni ya' means 'congratulations'. This has a specific dotted rhythm in the piece. Using other phrases commonly spoken during Chinese New Year, can children compose different rhythms for them? They could use dashes and dots to denote the note lengths for each syllable and perform them as a class:
 - Xin nian kuai le! (Happy New Year!)
 - Wan shi ru yi! (Ten thousand best wishes come true!)
 - Gong xi fa cai! (Best wishes on making a great fortune in the New Year!)

Assessment for Learning:

- *Responding and reflecting, both as artist and audience, is a fundamental part of learning in the expressive arts*

Questioning

Tool: No hands up approach

- Give me an example of a rhythm introduced in this song. Is this a dotted or a straight rhythm?
- How could we improve our overall performance?
- How else can we perform this song?

Feedback

Tool: Temporary comments

Give learners temporary comments on areas they need to develop. To improve their accuracy of rhythm, learners may need to revisit certain phrases and listen again to a recording. Give learners time to act upon these comments during the session and then comment again to see if they have been successful.

Self- and peer assessment

Tool: Post-it challenge

- In pairs, learners should discuss the following two questions and evaluate their learning.
- What have I learned through singing this song?
 - What do I need to do next to improve my singing / performing skills?