

Character Builder 您好嗎？

The basic unit of the Chinese language is the *zi* (字), i.e. a Chinese word. Each *zi* has a written form (called a character, made up of strokes), a sound (made up of consonant and vowel) and a meaning (or multiple meanings). When we speak or write Chinese, we string *zi* together to form terms, phrases and sentences.

This week: Words about music

歌

Pronunciation: *ge* (Putonghua, 1st tone), *goh* (Cantonese 1st tone)
Basic meaning: song, sing

歌 = 唱 (*chang*) = sing. 歌 = 曲 (*qu*) = song. 聲樂 (*sheng yue* = voice~music) = vocal music. 獨唱 (*du chang* = alone~sing) = solo, 合唱 (*he chang* = join~sing) = unison/chorus. 歌詞 (*ge ci* = song~words/poem) means libretti/lyrics.

歌伎 (*ge ji* = song~courtesans) are old-time song-stresses. 民歌手 (*min ge shou* = people~song~hand) are folk-singers. 流行樂隊 (*liu xing yue dui* = flow~current~music~team) = pop group. Eulogies are 頌歌 (*song ge* = praise~song), elegies/dirges are 輓歌 (*wan ge* = lament~song). 藝歌 (*yi ge* = art songs) means lieder, chansons. 歌后 (*ge hou* = song~queen) means divas, e.g. Maria Callas.

月下情歌 (*yue xia qing ge* = moon~under~emotion/love~song) means moonlight serenading.

by Diana Yue