

MISSIONARIES AND THE BEGINNINGS OF WESTERN MUSIC IN CHINA: THE CATHOLIC PRELUDE, 1294-1799

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Next to the Word of God, only music deserves being extolled as the mistress and governess of the feelings of the human heart.

— Martin Luther (1538)¹

The history of modern China is closely intertwined with the global expansion of Christianity.² The Protestant movement of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in particular, as some scholars have convincingly argued, had played an important part in China's search for modernity.³ No other agents of Western influence managed to achieve the kind of

¹ Cited in Walter E. Buszin, "Luther on Music", The Musical Quarterly, Vol. 32, No. 1 (1946), p. 81.

² Rather than following the accepted Chinese scheme of periodization, which starts with the Opium War of 1839, here the term modern China refers to China since the late Ming, as used in Jonathan D. Spence's The Search for Modern China (New York & London: W. W. Norton & Company, 1990).

³ The roles played by Christian missionaries in China's search for modernity have been studied by a number of scholars both in China and abroad. For recent studies in Chinese, see Gu Changsheng/顾長聲, Chuanjiaoshi yu jindai Zhongguol《傳教士與近代中國》/Missionaries and Modern China (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 1991); Shi Jinghuan/史静寰 and Wang Lixin/王立新, Jidujiao jiaoyu yu Zhongguo zhishi fenzil《基督教教育與中國知識分子》/Christian Education and Chinese Intellectuals (Fuzhou: Fujian jiaoyu chubanshe, 1998). For an excellent overall survey of China missions during the

penetration and geographical distribution in China as did the China missionaries.⁴ In a recent survey of works published on Chinese Christianity and China Mission, the veteran mission historian Jessie G. Lutz made the following remarks:

However unrepresentative missionaries in China might be of their compatriots at home, they represented the West for many Chinese. Missionaries, furthermore, came to China intent on effecting change. They brought heterodox religious doctrines and social values to China; increasingly, they became a two-way conduit for information and images of China in the West and for Western secular knowledge as well as Christian teachings in China. Although other avenues for cultural exchange opened up, missionaries remained important and available agents for knowledge transfer and change, eliciting both negative and positive reactions among the Chinese.⁵

Hence, a historical study of the place of Western music in China's transition from tradition to modernity must start with an investigation of the musical activities of the China missionaries. Although the focus of the present paper is on the practical uses of Western music in China by the Catholic missionaries in the years between 1601 and 1799, for the sake of perspective, it will be useful to review the situation of Western music before the arrival of Mathew Ricci in Beijing in 1601. By tracing the beginnings of Western music in China in relation to its Christian carriers from the Tang dynasty to the reign of the Qianlong Emperor and examining the concrete ways in which music was used in the Christian enterprise, it aims to highlight the utilitarian undercurrent behind the missionary introduction of Western music.

Nestorianism and the Earliest Presence of Christian Liturgical Music in China

Although records of the presence of Western music in China prior to the Opium War are few and fragmentary, it would be wrong to perpetuate the long-standing myth that China has traditionally been deeply isolationist and, as a corollary, to assume that historically China has had little musical contact with the outside world. It has been argued that China began her international musical intercourse, understandably with countries within the sphere

nineteenth century in English, see Paul A. Cohen, "Christian Missions and Their Impact to 1900", in John K. Fairbank ed., *The Cambridge History of China* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), Vol. 10, pp. 543-90. For more recent scholarship, see Daniel H. Bays ed., *Christianity in China: From the Eighteenth Century to the Present* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996). For studies on the significance of missions in intercultural relations between China and the West, see the collection of essays contained in John K. Fairbank ed., *The Missionary Enterprise in China and America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1974).

⁴ For specific studies of missionary presence in China, see Robert E. Entenmann, "Clandestine Catholics and the State in Eighteenth-Century Sichuan", *American Asian Review*, Vol. 5, No. 3 (1987), pp. 1-45; Ralph R. Covell, *The Liberating Gospel in China: The Christian Faith Among China's Minority Peoples* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Books, 1995); Murray A. Rubinstein, *The Protestant Community in Modern Taiwan: Mission, Seminary, and Church* (Armonk, N.Y.: M. E. Sharpe, 1991); *Ryan Dunch, Fuzhou Protestants and the Making of Modern China, 1857-1927* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001).

⁵ Jessie G. Lutz, "Chinese Christianity and China Missions: Works Published Since 1970", *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*, Vol. 20, No. 3 (1996), p. 104.

of her influence, as early as the Zhou dynasty (c.1122-256 BC).⁶[] Musical contact between China and Korea was certainly frequent during the Han dynasty (206 BC -220AD) as can be seen by both textual records and archaeological finds. During the ensuring period of almost four hundred years between the Han (206 B.C-220 A.D) and the Tang (618-907 A.D), rapid social, political and economic changes, characterised by cycles of prosperity, decay, chaos, and disunity, gave rise to a series of exciting cultural phenomena, the most obvious of which can be attributed to the introduction of Buddhism into China in the first century of the Christian era. Buddhism not only enriched Chinese people's spiritual life but also provided them with new kinds of sensual enjoyment by bringing with it the music of India. China's control over Central Asia during the two Han dynasties also made possible a flow of overland trade with the western regions. As a by-product of this communication, musical cultures of these regions were also transmitted into China, and, once introduced, modelled, adapted, transformed, and incorporated into the indigenous tradition, forming the bulk of China's musical culture. Indeed, the musics of Central Asia played such an important role in shaping China's indigenous musical tradition that nowadays most of the musical instruments used in China's national music ensemble (*minzu yuetuan* 民族樂團), as opposed to Western orchestra (Xi yuetuan 西樂團), are of foreign origins.8

Musical intercourse between China and the outside world, not surprisingly, reached its zenith during the Sui and Tang dynasties. The musical cosmopolitanism of the Sui and Tang was not only in spirit but in practice as well. This is amply evidenced by such written records found in the standard histories of the Sui and Tang, theoretical treatises on music, historical and encyclopaedic compilations, practical treatises, notes on music in memoirs and incidental musical references in poems, essays and jottings. Ancient sculptures, cave paintings such as those at Dunhuang in China's northwest and musical repertoires and instruments still in use in Chinese orchestras today also testify to this unprecedented cultural cosmopolitanism. So great

⁶ Yang Yinliu/杨蔭瀏, Zhongguo gudai yinyue shigaol《中國古代音樂史稿》/Draft History of Ancient Chinese Music (Beijing: Renmin yinyue chubanshe, 1980), Vol. 1, pp. 39-40.

⁷ Liao Fushu/廖輔叔, Zhongguo gudai yinyue jianshil《中國音樂簡史》/A Brief History of Ancient Chinese Music (Beijing: Renmin yinyue chubanshe, 1964), pp. 32-3. Lee Hye-ku/李惠求, "Musical Paintings in a Fourth-Century Korean Tomb". Korea Journal, Vol. 14, No. 3 (March 1974) (translated by Robert Provine), pp. 4-14. Chao Mei-pa asserts that China's musical exchange with the West began as early as in the Han Dynasty (206 B.C.-220 A.D.) but I have not found any reliable evidence to verify his assertion; see, Chao Mei-pa/趙梅伯), The Yellow Bell: A Brief Sketch of the History of Chinese Music (Baldwin: Barberry Hill, 1934), p. 51.

⁸ For an excellent study of musical instruments of East Asia and their origins, see Hayashi Kenzō/林謙三, *Dong Ya yueqi kaol*《東亞樂器考》/*An Investigation of Musical Instruments of East Asia*, translated from the Japanese by Qian Daosun/錢稻孫 (Beijing: Renmin yinyue chubanshe, 1995).

⁹ Tang music has been well studied by both Chinese and foreign scholars, for a study with strong historical emphasis, see Yang Yinliu, Vol. 1, pp. 191-273; Kishebe Shigeo/岸邊成雄, A Historical Study of the Music in the T'ang Dynasty (in Japanese with a long English summary) (Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press, 1960); for a musicological study of Tang music, see Laurence Picken et al., Music From the Tang Court: Transcribed from the Original, Unpublished, Sino-Japanese Manuscripts, Together with a Survey of Relevant Historical Sources (both Chinese and Japanese), Vols. 1-3 (London: Oxford University Press, 1981-87); Vols. 4-6 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987-97). Allan John Marett, "Hakuga's Flute-Score: A Tenth-Century Japanese Source of Tang-Music in Tablature." (Ph.D., Musicology, Cambridge University, 1976).

was the scale of musical intercourse that, according to Sui Shu (《隋書》/Official History of the Sui):

In the early years of the Kaihuang period (581-600) there were established seven musical groups (playing): court music, Qingshang (清商, songs originating under the Han and Wei), Kokuli (southern Manchuria and northern Korea), Indian, Parthian, and Kucha music, and wenkang (文康; also miscellaneous varieties: music of Kashgar, Phnom (southern Cambodia and Cochin-china), Sogdiana, Pekche (western Korea), T'u-chüeh (Turks), Silla (eastern Korea), and the State of T'ui. 10

Not surprisingly, during the Tang dynasty Chinese people also acquired their first taste of Western music.

"In many instances, the first intensive exposure of non-Western societies to Western music", writes the eminent ethnomusicologist Bruno Nettl, "was through church music." This is certainly true in the case of China. The first known evidence concerning the presence of Christian liturgical music in China is a Nestorian hymn. 12

Originated in Asia Minor and Syria out of the condemnation of Nestorius (c.386 – c.451) and his teachings by the Councils of Ephesus (A.D. 431) and Chalcedon (A.D.451), Jingjiao (景教) or Nestorianism came from the easternmost outposts of the Church. This Christian sect first appeared in China in the seventh century after a few centuries' developments in Mesopotamia, Persia, Central Asia, and the north-western confines of India and flourished until the tenth century. The details and significance of the hymn have been meticulously studied by a number of sinologues such as Paul Pelliot (1878-1945), Yoshiro Saeki (佐伯好郎, 1871-1965) and others. But the music, apart from some tentative speculations, remains to be investigated. The missionary historian Arthur Christopher Moule (1873-1951), for example, identified the hymn as a variant of the fast Syrian form of the Gloria in Excelsis. Liu Ching-chih (劉靖之), a Hong Kong-based historian of modern Chinese music, is inclined to believe that the tune should be similar to that of the Gregorian chant.

¹⁰ Sui Shu, 15. 29b (1739 edition). This passage, with minor modification, is translated and cited in L. Carrington Goodrich and Ch'u T'ung-tsu in "Foreign Music at the Court of Sui Wen-ti," *Journal of the American Oriental Society,* Vol. 69, No. 3 (1949), p. 148. For an early study of China's musical contact with the West, see Wang Kuang Chi (Wang Guangqi), "Musikalische Beziehungen zwischen China und dem Westen im Laufe der Jahrtausende/ The Musical Intercourse of China and the West during the Last Millennia" in W. Heffening and W. Kirfel ed., *Studien zur Geschichte und Kultur des Nahen und Fernen Ostens* (Festchrift - Paul Kahle) (Leyden: Brill, 1935), pp. 217-224.

¹¹ Bruno Nettl, *The Western Impact on World Music: Change, Adaptation, and Survival* (New York: Schirmer Books, 1985), p. 7.

¹² This hymn is entitled "Da Qin Jingjiao sanwei mengdu zan/大秦景教三威蒙度讚/Da Qin Luminous Religion Hymn in Adoration of the Holy Trinity". See Fang Hao/方豪, *Zhong Xi jiaotong shil* 《中西交通史》/*History of Exchanges between China and the West* (Taibei: Zhonghua wenhua chuban shiyeshe, 1953), Vol. 5, p. 127. This is A. C. Moule's translation.

¹³ Kenneth S. Latourette, *A History of Christianity Missions in China* (Taipei: Ch'eng-wen Publishing Company, 1966, reprint), pp. 46-51.

¹⁴ A. C. Moule, *Christians in China before the Year 1550* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1930), pp. 52-5.

¹⁵ Liu Ching-chih/劉靖之, "Ouzhou yinyue chuanru Zhongguo/歐洲音樂傳入中國/The Transmission of European Music into China", in Liu Ching-chih ed., *Zhongguo xin yinyushi lunjil*《中國新音樂史論集》/*History of New Music in China-Collected Essays* (Hong Kong: University of Hong Kong Press,

Nestorians had established themselves more or less independent of the Graeco-Roman world and become acclimated to the Tigris-Euphrates Valley for quite some time before entering China, some Chinese scholars even question the validity of calling this hymn Western music in any strict sense of the word. ¹⁶

We know little about how widely the Nestorian hymn was spread geographically in China. Nor do we know how well it was received by the Chinese populace. We do know, however, that a Nestorian community existed in the Tang capital Chang'an, from the seventh century, as evidenced by a Nestorian monument dug up in 1625. Dated 781, this stone stele has an inscription in both Syriac and Chinese and can still be seen to this day in the Museum of the Forest of Stelae, Xian.¹⁷ Given the fact that several sightings of the Nestorian hymn-singing were recorded by later missionaries who came to meet the Mongol rulers in the early thirteenth century, it is perhaps not entirely unreasonable to assume that it had enjoyed a degree of popularity among the Chinese and Mongol believers of the Christian faith.

The Introduction of Catholic Liturgical Music During the Mongol Interlude

The earliest evidence of instruction in church music in China is found in the letters sent from China by John of Monte Corvino (1247-1328) early in the fourteenth century.

A Franciscan of the Order of Minor Brothers, John of Monte Corvino is believed to be the first Roman Catholic missionary to enter China. He reached Khan-baliq (modern Beijing) in 1294 and died there in 1328 after preaching the Christian faith for 34 years in China. In a letter dated January 8, 1305, John gives the following detailed account of his activities in the Mongol capital:

I have bought one after another forty boys, the sons of pagans, of an age between seven and eleven years, who were as yet learning no religion. And I have baptised them and taught them Latin letters and our rite; and I have written for them thirty Psalters with Hymnaries and two Breviaries, with which eleven boys now know our Office and maintain the choir services and weekly as (we do) in a convent whether I am present or not and several of them are writing Psalters and other necessary things. And the lord emperor is greatly delighted with their chanting. I strike the bells at all the hours, and perform the Divine Office with a congregation of babes and sucklings. But we sing by heart because we have no service-book with notes.¹⁸

Here not only do we have a clear picture of the type of music used in his congregation

^{1986),} p. 13, n8.

¹⁶ Liu Qi/劉奇, "Zhongguo gudai chuanru de Jidu jiaohui yinyue tanxun/中國古代傳入的基督教會音樂探尋", *Yinyue Yishu*/音樂藝術/*The Art of Music*, No. 1 (1987), pp. 21-27.

¹⁷ For a translation of the inscription on the monument, see James Legge, *Christianity in China: Nestorianism, Roman Catholicism, Protestantism* (London: Trübner, 1888). For a study of the monument, see Yoshirŏ Saeki, *The Nestorian Monument in China* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1915) and Moule, *Christians in China before the Year 1550*, pp. 27-51.

¹⁸ Translated and cited in Moule, *Christians in China before the Year 1550*, p. 173. See also, Christopher Dawson ed., *The Mongol Mission: Narratives and Letters of the Franciscan Missionaries in Mongolia and China in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries*, translated by a nun of Stanbrook Abbey (London: Sheed and Ward, 1955), p. 225.

but also a rare knowledge of a range of things: the contents of his teaching ("Latin letters" and Christian rituals, "Psalters with Hymnaries and Breviaries" and so on); the ways music was taught ("we sing by heart," "no service-book with notes"), and the number and type of student he taught and their socio-economic background ("forty boys, the sons of pagans, of an age between seven and eleven years"). We can see clearly that the religious practice in his domain was modelled on what was being used back in Rome. Mass was celebrated according to the Latin rite, as he reveals in the following passage:

I have now translated in that language and character the whole New Testament and the Psalter... And I understand and read and preach openly and in public as it were in testimony of the law of Christ. And I arranged with the aforesaid king George [a Nestorian converted to Roman Catholicism by John], if he had lived, to translate the whole Latin Office, that it might be sung throughout the whole land in his dominion. And whilst he was alive Mass used to be celebrated in his church according to the Latin rite in that character and tongue, both the words of the Canon and the Prefaces.¹⁹

In the same letter John also expressed his wish to have some helpers sent from the Papal Court. Music was very much on his mind when he made the request, asking specifically that those who were willing to come should bring "an Antiphon and a Legends of the Saints, a Gradual and a Psalter with notes for a copy," for he had "nothing but a portable Breviary with the short Lessons and a small Missal."²⁰

John of Monte Corvino's attention to music in his mission work can also be seen in a letter to his confrères in Crimea and to the Minorites and Preachers of Persia written in February 1306. In this letter he not only tells us how singing was performed in his church services ("[W]e in our oratory sing the office regularly by heart, because we have not notes.") but also the possible effect of this singing on the Mongol rulers. "The lord Kaan[sic] can hear our voices in his chamber," John enthused, "this wonderful fact is published far and wide among the people, and will have great effect, as the divine mercy shall dispose and fulfil."²¹

John of Monte Corvino's ability to establish warm relations with the Mongol ruler was to some extent due to his clever use of music. If the following passage, written roughly at the same time, can be believed, we can at least assume that the Mongol Khan's attitude toward Western music was more than favourable:

The great Khan took exceeding delight in their [the forty boys] singing; therefore the aforesaid brother [John], their master and teacher, was often called by him to bring with him four or six and solace him with their singing. And he, willingly obeying him and glad to give satisfaction and pleasure in this way, used often to repair to the presence of the great Khan and his satraps in the royal hall, taking with him alternately four, six, or eight of the aforesaid boys, and gave him no little joy and happiness through their sweet melody, charming him and his so deeply and wonderfully refreshing them.²²

¹⁹ Moule, Christians in China before the Year 1550, p. 176.

²⁰ Moule, Christians in China before the Year 1550, pp. 174, 175; Dawson, The Mongol Mission, p. 227.

²¹ Moule, Christians in China before the Year 1550, p. 180.

²² "Johnnis Vitofurani Chronicon", translated and quoted in Moule, *Christians in China before the Year* 1550, p. 207. Moule reckons that in this summary "we seem to have some fragments of the original letter preserved for us here which would otherwise be lost, for the passage about the Brother being

John of Monte Corvino himself was certainly happy with the forty choirboys in his charge and delighted by their progress. Despite the language difficulties (John did not take the trouble to learn Chinese and the scenes from the Bible in his church bore inscriptions in Latin, Turkish or Mongolian, and Persian), the Chinese boys did not seem to have any problem singing hymns in Latin. The boys, as John wrote, "also learnt the canonical Hours and singing so perfectly that they were able to chant them very well alternately in the choir; and some of them also who were more intelligent and had better voices than the others led the choir gloriously." The musical proficiency of the boys is further tested when John built two churches. Because it was not possible to be present at the same time at both of the churches John divided the boys into two groups and placed a group in each church. To his delight the boys performed the Office by themselves quite satisfactorily.

John of Monte Corvino was not the only Catholic missionary who used music in his mission work. Earlier in late 1253 when the Flemish Friar William of Rubruck (ca. 1210 – ca. 1270), a Flemish Franciscan who was sent by the French King Louis IX in early 1253 to win the Khan Möngke (re. 1251-1259) to the Christian cause against Islam, reached the Mongol capital Karakorum, he also left records of Christian musical activities in the Mongol domain. From his Itinerarium, written in 1255, we know that Satarch (d. 1257), the great grandson of Genghis Khan, had "around him Nestorian priests, who strike the board and chant their office." We know also that upon entering a Nestorian church he and his travel companions "chanted joyfully, at the top of our voice, the Salve Regina." When Friar Odoric of Pordenone (1286-1331), an Italian Franciscan who was in China sometime between 1322 and 1328, and another Christian bishop were granted an audience by the Mongol Khan they sang "in loud voice, saying Veni Creator Spiritus, etc." Similarly, when John of Marignolli, ²⁷ a papal legate, went to see the Mongol emperor after arriving in Beijing in 1342, he "went before the monarch in full vestments, with a procession, a cross, candles, and incense" and sang "I believe in one God." ²⁸

From these examples we can see the importance of music in the work of early Catholic missionaries. The type of music introduced was authentic, although piece meal Western church music, and their motivation in using music and, in the case of John of Monte Corvino, teaching "the sons of pagans" was purely utilitarian, that is: music was part of the church ritual and to glorify the deity. Because of the use of Latin in their services, unlike missionaries of the late nineteenth century, issues of adaptation, incorporation or appropriation did not occur

summoned to take his choristers to sing to the Khan cannot be explained as a summary or even as a vague recollection of any part of either of John's letters as they now exist."

²³ Moule, Christians in China before the Year 1550, pp. 206, 207.

²⁴ The Mission of Friar William of Rubruck: His Journey to the Court of the Great Khan Möngke, 1253-1255, trans. Peter Jackson (London: Hakluyt Society, 1990), p. 127.

²⁵ The Mission of Friar William of Rubruck, p. 165.

²⁶ Moule, *Christians in China before the Year 1550*, p. 196. On Odoric, see Igor de Rachewiltz, *Prester John and Europe's Discovery of East Asia* (Canberra: Australian National University Press, 1972), pp. 179-86.

²⁷ For a biographical account of John of Marignolli, see Samuel Couling, *The Encyclopaedia Sinica* (Shanghai: Kelly and Walsh, 1917), p. 327.

²⁸ Latourette, A History of Christianity Missions in China, p. 72.

to the Catholic priest, as the music they used was entirely independent of the indigenous traditions. As far as teaching method was concerned, judging by the fact that hymns were mainly learnt by ear, it is safe to assert no forms of notation were introduced at the time. Nor was there any issue with regard to the reception of the music on the Chinese part. The Chinese boys mentioned in John's letters certainly had no difficulty singing Western scales and church modes. Insofar as the audience of Western music was concerned, the Mongol emperor and a small circle of the Mongol ruling elite were its main recipients, indicating that the scope of its influence was rather narrow. Moreover, given that Christianity during the Yuan was confined mainly to the Mongol followers for the Church, it is not unreasonable to assume that Western music did not extend to the larger population of Han Chinese.

The Presence of Western Keyboard Instruments in Late Ming and Early Qing

The follow of Western music, like that of Christianity, was halted after the collapse of the Mongol dynasty in 1368. As a combined result of the demise of the Mongol empire, the devastation of the Black Death in Europe, and the dominance of Ottoman Muslim power over much of the Near East, the period between 1368 and 1583 saw the near total disappearance of Christianity from the Chinese scene. Although by the early sixteenth century the voyages of Ferdinand Magellan and Vasco da Gama had brought the Portuguese to Macao and later the Spaniards to Manila, ²⁹ the reopening of Catholic missions in China was to wait until the last decades of the sixteenth century.

Coupled with the reappearance of Christian missionaries was the appearance of Western keyboard instruments in China. Once again, the introduction of Western music in China resulted from Christian global expansion. Matteo Ricci (利瑪窦, 1552-1610), the Italian Jesuit who more than anyone else was responsible for the re-opening of China to Catholic influence at this time, was also instrumental for the introduction of Western keyboard instruments in China. Ricci's story has long been the focus of scholarly attention. And his importance in the introduction of Western music, already studied by such scholars as Yin Falu (陰法魯, 1915-2002), needs only a brief mention here. It

Ricci arrived in Zhaoqing (肇慶) in Southern China in September 1583. One of the presents he had brought with him was a small keyboard instrument named *manicordio*. The precise identification of this instrument is difficult. While Tao Yabing identifies the instrument as clavichord, other scholars such as Jonathan Spence prefer to call it harpsichord or spinet.³²

²⁹ Jonathan D. Spence, *The Chan's Great Continent* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1998), p. 19.

³⁰ For a recent work on Ricci, see Jonathan D. Spence, "Matteo Ricci and the Ascent to Peking", in *Chinese Roundabout: Essays in History and Culture* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1992). Also see John D. Young, *East-West Synthesis: Matteo Ricci and Confucianism* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1980).

³¹ Yin Falu/陰法魯, "Limadou and Ouzhou jiaohui yinyue zhi dong chuan/利玛窦与欧洲教会音乐之东传." *Yinyue yanjiu*/音乐研究/*Music Research*, No. 2 (1982), pp. 87-94.

³² Tao Yabing/陶亚兵, Zhong Xi yinyue jiaoliu shigaol《中西音乐交流史稿》/The History of Musical Exchange between China and Western World (Beijing: Zhongguo da baike quanshu chubanshe, 1994), pp. 36-41. Jonathan D. Spence, The Memory Palace of Matteo Ricci (New York: Penguin Books, 1984), p. 197. Lam Ching Wah/林青華, "Musical Contact between China and Europe in the Sixteenth Century",

In Chinese the instrument was simply translated as xiqin (西琴, Western stringed instrument). It was a gift for the Chinese emperor. This instrument, according to a brief description in the Qingchao xu wenxian tongkao (《清朝續文献通考》, Sequel to the General History of Institutions and Critical Examination of Documents and Studies of the Qing Dynasty), compiled in 1784, "was three chi (尺, 1/3 meter) in height and five chi (=1.67 meter) in width. It was hidden in a box with 72 strings made from gold, silver or iron."³³ This was perhaps one of the first European musical instruments ever imported into China.³⁴ Ricci also ordered from Macao a small hand organ with bellows. But he failed to present it to the court because the instrument did not arrive in Nanjing until Ricci had embarked on his journey to the north.³⁵

As has been pointed out by Jonathan Spence, Ricci's inclusion of a musical instrument in his gift-list was not at all unintentional but an important part of his strategic thinking.³⁶ It was entirely in line with "the Jesuit policy of using music as one of their noblest and most effective means of conversion."³⁷ Nor was the inclusion of music in Ricci's mission something new. "The use of music – both sung and played," writes Spence, "was widespread and popular in the order in Ricci's day."³⁸

Ricci's choice of harpsichord and organ was also a deliberate one. "[O]rgans, harpsichords, and virginals," as the musicologist Ian Woodfield has pointed out, "occupy a very significant place in the history of Renaissance oriental diplomacy, especially during the period from c. 1575 to c. 1625." This is partly because these instruments "displayed the best aspects of European artistry, craftsmanship and mechanical ingenuity." Of the various Western musical instruments, keyboard instruments certainly stood out as the instruments with which the Chinese were most impressed. In Ricci's own words, the Chinese "have expressed themselves pleased with organ music and with all our musical instruments." The sensation caused by the

Chinese Culture, Vol. 39, No. 3 (1998), p. 32.

³³ Xu wenxian tongkao, juan 120, yue (樂, music) 20, cited in Fang Hao/方豪, Zhong Xi jiaotongshi, Vol. 5, p. 3.

³⁴ Fang Hao, Zhong Xi jiaotongshi, Vol. 5, p. 1. Shen Zhibai/沈知白 states that a Western organ, Chinese named Xinglong sheng (興隆笙), was presented by certain Muslim envoys to the Mongol emperor Kublai Khan around 1260-1264 but he does not provide any evidence to sustain his claim, see Zhongguo yinyue shi gangyaol 《中國音樂史綱要》/An Outline History of Chinese Music (Shanghai wenyi chubanshe, 1982), pp. 95-96. Peter Williams also indicates that an organ of 90 pipes had been sent from an Arab count to China sometime during the thirteenth century. See"Organ" in The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians (London, 1980), Vol. 13, p. 727. The earliest available Chinese record of Western organs and keyboard instruments is found in Wang Linheng's (王臨亨, 1548-1601) Yuejian bianl 《粵劍編》(1601)(Taipei: Guangwen shuju, 1970), pp. 139-40.

³⁵ Spence, *The Memory Palace of Matteo Ricci*, p. 195.

³⁶ Spence, *The Memory Palace of Matteo Ricci*, p. 197.

³⁷ Eta Harich Schneider, A History of Japanese Music (London: Oxford University Press, 1973), p. 452.

³⁸ Spence, *The Memory Palace of Matteo Ricci*, p. 197.

³⁹ Ian Woodfield, "The Keyboard Recital in Oriental Diplomacy, 1520-1620", *Journal of the Royal Musical Association*, Vol. 115, No. 1 (1990), p. 33.

⁴⁰ Woodfield, "The Keyboard Recital in Oriental Diplomacy, 1520-1620", p. 33.

⁴¹ Joyce Z. Lindorff, "The Harpsichord and Clavichord in China during the Ming and Qing Dynasties", *Early Keyboard Studies Newsletter*, Vol. 8, No. 4 (October 1994), pp. 1-8.

⁴² Nicola Trigault ed., China in the Sixteenth Century: The Journals of Matthew Ricci, 1583-1610, trans,

clavichord in particular "was not only exaggerated, it was almost ridiculous."⁴³ Ricci was not exaggerating. Chinese sources confirm his assertion. An early example is found in *Pengchuang xulu* (《蓬窗續錄》, *Miscellaneous Notes from the Thatched Window*) by the late Ming scholar Feng Shike (馮時可, b. 1547):

After arriving in Beijing, I met a foreign monk named Li Madou [Matteo Ricci]....He showed me a foreign qin which is entirely different from that of China in terms of construction. Its strings are made of copper wires. It does not use fingers to play. Instead of using figures it is designed to be played by means of a keyboard. The sound it produces is clear and melodious.⁴⁴

So impressed were some of the Chinese elites that in a travel account of scenes and novel objects in the imperial capital printed in 1635, Liu Tong (劉何) and Yu Yizheng (于奕正) made reference to the Western musical instruments including an organ made of "iron wires" they saw at the Catholic Church near the Xuanwu gate. ⁴⁵

Ricci, of course, was not the only early Jesuit who used keyboard instruments to impress Chinese literati. For example, when a group of Chinese visitors visited a Catholic church in Sanshan (三山), Fujian province, where the Jesuits Julius Aleni(艾儒略, 1582-1649) and Andrius Rudamina (盧安德, 1596-1631) had been active since the mid-1620s, Rudamina showed them the organ at his church. Awestruck at the beauty and magnificence of the instrument, "everyone burst into a general hurrah."

Ricci was certainly conscious of the use of clavichord and organ as a specimen of European craftsmanship and mechanical ingenuity in impressing his audience. He was also aware of the artistry of European music in advancing his missionary cause. Ricci noticed from very early on that music constituted an important part of Chinese social and religious life and the Chinese ruling classes in particular were terribly serious about music. He hay Fourth advocates of Western music, he found "the whole art of Chinese music seems to consist in producing a monotonous rhythmic beat as they know nothing of the variations and harmony that can be produced by combing different musical notes." During a brief stay in Nanjing in 1600, he arranged for the newly arrived Diego Pantoja (龐迪我, ca.1571-1618) to study harpsichord repertoire and tuning from the musically-gifted Jesuit priest, Lazzaro Cattaneo (郭居静, 1560-1640). Pantoja succeeded in mastering several sonatas and acquired some basic knowledge of tuning the instrument. This tactical planning, like his skilful use of Western

Louis J. Gallagher (New York, Random House, 1953), p. 22.

⁴³ Trigault, China in the Sixteenth Century, p. 320.

⁴⁴ Cited in Fang Hao, *Zhong Xi jiaotongshi*, Vol. 5, p. 3. A biographical sketch of Feng Shike can be found in L. Carrington Goodrich and Chaoying Fang eds., *Dictionary of Ming Biography* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1976), Vol. 1, pp. 455-58.

⁴⁵ Liu Tong/劉侗 and Yu Yizheng/于奕正, Dijing jingwu luel《帝京景物略》/A Brief Account of Scenes and Objects Seen in the Imperial Capital Beijing, prefaced in 1635, cited in Fang Hao, Zhong Xi jiaotongshi, Vol. 5, p. 3.

⁴⁶ Giulio Aleni and Andrius Rudamina, *Kou duo richaol* 《口鐸日抄》/*Daily Records taken from the Dialogues between the Jesuit Missionaries and Some Chinese Scholars in Fujian*, cited in Fang Hao, *Zhong Xi jiaotongshi*, Vol. 5, p. 6.

⁴⁷ Trigault, *China in the Sixteenth Century*, p. 335.

⁴⁸ Trigault, *China in the Sixteenth Century*, p. 22.

scientific and mathematical knowledge to help convert members of the Chinese ruling elites to the Roman Catholic faith, proved to be very rewarding indeed. In 1601 when Ricci finally managed to present his gifts to the throne, the harpsichord caught the eyes of the reclusive Wanli (萬厲) emperor (r.1573-1620).⁴⁹ To Ricci's delight,

Later on, four of the eunuchs who played stringed instruments before the throne came, in the King's name, to see the Fathers. They conducted an elaborate school in the royal palace and they came to ask the Fathers to teach them to play on the clavichord..... From being a casual student, Father Didaco [Diego Pantoja] had become very proficient on this instrument, and he went to the palace every day to give them a music lesson.⁵⁰

Clearly the harpsichord was responsible for the Jesuits' gaining a footing at the Chinese court. Ricci certainly made good use of this opportunity. In response to the court musicians' interest "in having the pieces they were playing put to Chinese words," Ricci "took this occasion to compose eight pieces." Rather than confining himself to what was conventional in Church music, Ricci showed his Christian pragmatism by composing his own verses in simple and clear classical Chinese. As will be recalled, hymns in China before Ricci were sung in Latin. Not surprisingly, Xiqin quyi bazhang (《西琴曲意八章》, Eight Songs for the Western Stringed Instrument), as the song cycle was titled in Chinese, had a strong focus on moral and religious themes. Spence summarises the songs thus:

He wrote of the striving of the human heart toward God, of the folly of our desire for long life, of how the grace of God fills the world more surely than the harmonies of musical instruments fill the hall in which they are played, of how youth glides by before we have time to think of ourselves, and of how death spares no one, being neither in awe of the king's palace nor compassionate to the poor man's hove.⁵³

To Ricci's satisfaction, it proved to be an instant success. In Ricci's own words:

[N]umerous requests from the literati were received, asking for copies of them, and giving high praise to the lessons they taught. They said that these songs reminded the King that he should govern the realm with the virtues suggested in the songs, and in order to satisfy the demand for copies of them, the Fathers printed them, together with other pieces, as a musical booklet, written in European lettering and also in Chinese Characters.⁵⁴

Within a short time these songs were printed several times and circulated widely among

⁴⁹ For a fascinating account of the Wanli reign, see Ray Huang, *1587, A Year of No Significance: the Ming Dynasty in Decline* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981).dou

⁵⁰ Trigault, China in the Sixteenth Century, p. 376.

⁵¹ Trigault, China in the Sixteenth Century, p. 378.

⁵² Li Madou/利瑪窦 (Ricci), *Xiqin quyi bazhangl* 《西琴曲意八章》, in Li Zhizao/李之藻 ed., *Tianxue chuhanl* 《天學初涵》/*Early Writings on Christianity in China*, Vol. 1, Facsimile edition (Taipei: Xuesheng shuju, 1965), pp. 283-91.

⁵³ Spence, *The Memory Palace of Matteo Ricci*, p. 198. See pp. 198-99 for a translation of the second song of the cycle. A good discussion of the texts of these songs can also be found in Vincent Cronin, *The Wise Man from the West* (London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1955), pp. 178-80.

⁵⁴ Trigault, *China in the Sixteenth Century*, p. 378.

the Confucian elites.⁵⁵ The popularity of Ricci's song cycle, though does not tell us much about the music, indicates clearly the effectiveness of Ricci's clever use of music. The fact that all the remarks made by Chinese literati were on the content of the texts must have been particularly pleasing to Ricci. Once again, music was used as a vehicle to spread the Christian message.

Organs, harpsichords and clavichords are also mentioned scores of times in the letters of Jesuit missionaries working in China during the early years of the Qing dynasty and the writings of celebrated Qing literary figures. This too testifies to the effectiveness and longevity of Ricci's strategy of using music to effect an attitudinal change on the part of the Chinese ruling elite toward Christianity. The early Qing scholar Qu Dajun (屈大均, 1630-1696), for example, recorded in favourable terms his sighting of the organ at St Paul's church in Macao. Describing the same instrument, Liang Di (梁迪), also a celebrated early Qing scholar, was even more laudatory in his poems. The historian Tan Qian (談遷, 1594-1658), author of the voluminous Ming chronicle *Guo que* (《國確》, 1653), was so delighted upon being shown a clavichord by a Jesuit during his sojourn in Beijing in the mid 1650s that he wrote the following detailed description of the instrument in his *Bei you lu* (《北游錄》, *Records of the Trip to the North*):

The qin (\ref{sp}) has iron wires. The casket-like box is five feet lengthwise and about nine inches high. A middle board divides it. Above the board are forty-five strings arranged over a slant, left to right, and tied to small pins. There is another slant. Under this slant are hidden small protrusions, the same in number as the strings. On a lower level is a corresponding row of forty-five keys. The hand presses them and the pitch sounds as in the score. An elegantly decorated book of high quality paper was on a stand. A carved quill was used to touch the ink and write from left to right-Chinese cannot recognize this writing. ⁵⁸

So impressed was Zhao Yi (趙翼, 1727-1814) with an organ he saw that he not only minutely described the physical shape of the instrument in his *Yanpu zaji* (《檐曝雜記》, *Miscellaneous Notes from Under the Exposed Eave*) but also composed several verses describing its magnificent sound effects in his *Oubei shichao* (《甌北詩鈔》, *Poems of Zhao Yi*). In his extreme amazement he wondered how such superb craftsmanship and mechanical ingenuity could have come from the land of barbarians.⁵⁹

⁵⁵ According to George Dunne, these "eight simple motets" were first published by Li Zhizao in Beijing in 1629, and have been reissued several times since then and were included in a list of the best literary productions of China in the late eighteenth century, see George H. Dunne, *Generation of Giants : The Story of the Jesuits in China in the Last Decades of the Ming Dynasty* (London: Burns & Oates, 1962), p. 79. However, available evidence seems to suggest that they were published at least 20 years earlier.

⁵⁶ Qu Dajun/屈大均, *Guangdon xinyul* 《廣東新語》 *News from Guangdong* (Hong Kong: Zhonghua shuju, 1974), p. 37.

⁵⁷ Fang Hao, Zhong Xi jiaotongshi, Vol. 5, p. 7.

⁵⁸ Tan Qian/談遷, *Bei you lul*北游錄/*Records of the Trip to the North* (Beijing: Zhonghua shiju, 1960), p. 46. Cited and translated in Lindorff, "The Harpsichord and Clavichord in China", p. 3. Tan Qian's major works include *Guoquel* 《國權》/*Evaluation of the work of our dynasty* (1656) and *Zaolin zazul* 《枣林雜俎》/*Miscellaneous offerings from Zaolin* (1644). For a biographical sketch of Tan Qian, see Goodrich and Fang eds., *Dictionary of Ming Biography*, Vol. 2, pp. 1239-42.

⁵⁹ These poems are reprinted in Fang Hao, *Zhong Xi jiaotongshi*, Vol. 5, pp. 7-9. Zhao Yi, a well-known

This abundance of literary references to Western keyboard instruments points to two basic facts: the ready availability of the Western keyboard instruments in China and the Jesuits' purposeful use of them to effect conversion from the top down. The former is evidenced nowhere more clearly than the widespread use of organs, spinets, harpsichords and clavichords not only in areas such as Macao and Canton where the foreign presence was keenly felt but also in the imperial capital and small places like Sanshan, Fujian province. The latter is illustrated by the Jesuits' deliberate efforts to use these Western mechanical devices as a novelty to gain religious concessions from the court and cultivate friendship with Chinese social and political elites. This is not surprising. After all, keyboard instruments had been the European diplomats' gift of choice in oriental diplomacy since the thirteenth century.⁶⁰ When Francis Xavier (1506-1552), the man responsible for opening the Jesuit mission in Japan, visited Yamaguchi in April 1551, for example, he offered the daimyō Kuroda Yoshitaka (黒田孝高 1546-1604), among a number of rare gifts, a Western keyboard instrument.⁶¹ In the years after Xavier's gift, keyboard playing "became an integral part of the syllabus of Jesuit seminaries." The Manchu royal court in its early years certainly had a constant supply of keyboard instruments from a range of Christian missionaries and foreign emissaries. According to Father Matteo Ripa (1682-1746), a Roman Catholic secular priest who served at the court from 1711 to 1723, the Kangxi emperor had "a cymbal or a spinet in almost every apartment."63 In fact, Kangxi had so many Western instruments in his possession that when the Lazarist missionary Theodorico Pedrini (德禮格, 1671-1746) arrived in Beijing in February 1711 in response to the emperor's request for a European musician, he was ordered to "come and lodge in the house of Ton-kew-kew [Tong guojiu/佟國舅?, a brother-in-law of Kangxi], for the purpose of tuning the cymbals and spinets."64 In Beijing alone, at least five variously named keyboard instruments were mentioned in both the Jesuits and the Chinese sources between 1605 and 1640.65

There is evidence to suggest that keyboard instruments were not only brought as gifts but also built in China in early Qing.⁶⁶ The fact that Ricci had ordered an organ to be made in Macao before he embarked on his journey north in 1600 indicates clearly that organ-making was nothing new in the Portuguese colony. Based on Alfons Väth's biography of Schall, Tao

mid-Qing poet, historian, and academician, was a *jinshi* of the Qianlong period. Apart from his literary works he was also known for his historical work *Ershi er shi zhaji* (《二十二史哲記》, *Critical Notes on the 22 Histories*) (1799), which covers the 24 standard histories up to and including the *Mingshi*. Zhao Yuanren, the May Fourth reformer of Chinese music best known for his experiment in Chinese art songs, was a descendant of Zhao Yi. For a brief biography of Zhao Yi by Tu Lien-che, see Arthur Hummel ed., *Eminent Chinese of the Ch'ing Period (1644-1912)* (Washington: U.S Government Printing Office, 1943-44), p. 76.

⁶⁰ See Woodfield, "The Keyboard Recital in Oriental Diplomacy", pp. 33-62.

⁶¹ Harich-Schneider, A History of Japanese Music, p. 448.

⁶² Woodfield, "The Keyboard Recital in Oriental Diplomacy", p. 36.

⁶³ Matteo Ripa, Memoirs of Father Ripa during Thirteen Years' Residence at the Court of Peking in the Service of the Emperor of China, selected and translated by Fortunato Prandi (New York: Wiley & Putnam, 1846), p. 75.

⁶⁴ Ripa, Memoirs of Father Ripa, p. 75.

⁶⁵ Tao, Zhong-Xi yinyue jiaoliu shigao, pp. 53-55.

⁶⁶ Lindorff, "The Harpsichord and Clavichord in China during the Ming and Qing Dynasties", p. 4.

Yabing credits Johann Adam Schall von Bell (湯若望, 1592-1666) with the distinction of being the first to build an organ ("orgel") in Beijing in 1652.⁶⁷ Most of the Jesuits who came to China in the late Ming and early Qing periods were men of many talents. They excelled particularly in the fields of engineering, astronomy, painting and music. Schall was certainly capable of carrying out the task of building an organ.

A skillful user of science and technology "to the greater glory of God," Schall had been using his prowess in Western technology as a means of converting the imperial court to Christianity ever since his arrival in China in 1622.⁶⁸ In 1640 he succeeded in repairing for the Chongzhen (崇禎) emperor (r. 1628-44) the very harpsichord Ricci had earlier presented to the emperor Wanli. Like Ricci, Schall was quick to take advantage of every opportunity that his technical skills created for him to propagate the Christian religion:

When he sent the new harpsichord to the Emperor, he offered, at the same time, a magnificent album representing the explanation in Chinese characters, and to this he added a representation of the adoration of the three Magi in wax, with the figures carefully coloured.⁶⁹

One can well image Schall's elation when the Chongzhen emperor asked him to translate and explain the two Latin verses inscribed on the instrument, which read "Laudate in cymbalis benesonantibus" (Praise Him upon loud cymbals; from Psalm 150) and "Laudate nomen eius in choro; in tympano et psalterio psallant ei" (Praise His name with singing and with drums; play to Him on the lute; from Psalm 149).⁷⁰

The Portuguese Jesuit Thomas Pereira (徐日昇, 1645-1708), who, as will be seen, was responsible for the initial introduction of Western music theory in China, was another Jesuit whose name was associated with organ-building in early Qing China. Xu is said to have been responsible for installing a grand organ as well as a set of bells in the cathedral located near the Xuanwu gate in the southern part of Beijing. In 1713, Theodorico Pedrini "succeeded in building two new organs." Louis de Pernon (南光國, 1664-1702) not only taught the Kangxi emperor Western music but also made clavecines, epinettes, timpanons and other musical instruments for him. The Jesuit Charles Slaviczek (嚴嘉祿, d. 1735), who once impressed the monarch with his versatility in playing all the Western musical instruments in Kangxi's possession, was also known for his skill as an organ and musical clock maker.

⁶⁷ Alfons Väte, Johann Adam Schall von Bell, S. J., *Missionar in China, Kaiserlicher Astronom under Ratgeber am Hofe von Peking, 1592-1666* (Cologne, J. P. Bachem, 1933). See Tao, pp. 71-72.

⁶⁸ Jonathan D. Spence, *The China Helpers: Western Advisers in China 1620-1960* (London: Bodley Head, 1969), p. 7.

⁶⁹ Evariste Régis Huc, *Christianity in China, Tartary, and Tibet* (London, 1857-58), Vol. 2, pp. 313-14. I am mindful of Paul Pelliot's remark: "On Chinese history no scholar would ever dream to seek reliable information from Huc." Simon Leys, "Peregrinations and Perplexities of Père Huc" in *The Burning Forest* (London: Grafton Books, 1988), p. 55. But Chinese sources, as cited in Fang Hao (*Zhong Xi jiaotongshi*, Vol. 5, p. 4), seem to corroborate Huc's account.

⁷⁰ Cited and translated in Woodfield, "The Keyboard Recital in Oriental Diplomacy", p. 60.

⁷¹ François Picard, "Music", in Nicolas Standaert ed., *Handbook of Christianity in China*, Vol. 1 (Leiden, Boston and Köln: Brill, 2001), p. 853.

⁷² Fang Hao, *Zhong Xi jiaotongshi*, Vol. 5, pp. 12-15.

The Kangxi Emperor and Western Music

The Kangxi emperor's well-known fascination with European learning and goods may have come from different sources, 73 but his extraordinary interest in Western music certainly resulted from his close association with the Christian missionaries, especially the Jesuits. The congregation of musically-gifted Jesuit missionaries in Beijing during the reign of the Kangxi emperor (r. 1661-1772) was another example of the Jesuits' use of music in advancing their religious purposes. Among the nine priests recruited by Father Joachim Bouvet (白晋, 1656-1730) we find the musically gifted Philibertus Geneix (顏理伯, 1667-1699), the abovementioned Louis de Pernon and Doninicus Parrenin (巴多明, 1665-1741). Parrenin could play the flageolet, flute as well as the navel horn. Pernon was good at the violin and flute. As Fang Hao has demonstrated, by mid 1699 Kangxi had gathered around him Jesuits who were not only able to play such wind and keyboard instruments as the flute, bassoon and clavecin, but also capable of playing such stringed instruments as the violin and viola. 74

Unlike Ricci, who was excluded from the inner court of the Wanli emperor, these Jesuits had plenty of access to the emperor. Being the music instructor of the Kangxi emperor and his sons, Pedrini had even been granted the privilege of riding a horse in the Forbidden City. In sharp contrast to the aloof Wanli, the Kangxi emperor was on intimate terms with some of the Jesuits often talking to them on his tours and inviting them to his temporary palaces. Especially for a decade after 1692, he placed great trust in the missionaries putting them once again in charge of the astronomy bureau, consulting them in matters of cartography and engineering, and using their help in diplomatic negotiations. In March 1699, for example, when Kangxi embarked on his southern tour of inspection, he invited nine Jesuits to board his imperial boat. During the journey he more than once listened to them playing Western music and asked various questions concerning Western musical theory, especially Western way of notating tunes, with the intention to reform Chinese music.

Taking advantage of the Kangxi emperor's interest in Western music, Thomas Pereira, upon hearing the emperor's return, led a group of musically-gifted Jesuits to the imperial palace and offered to play Western ensemble music for the emperor on 21 June of that same year. Although on this occasion their play was a dismal failure, they managed to maintain the emperor's interest through their subsequent musical activities. It is reported that Thomas Pereira, Pernon, Parrennin, and the Italian artist lay brother Gio Gheradini played together at the emperor's request. On one occasion, according to a nineteenth century French source, they knelt on the floor and played for the monarch non-stop for four hours.⁷⁸

Kangxi also had the habit of taking the missionaries with him on his many hunting or military excursions. In a letter describing one such excursion, Thomas Pereira, the Jesuit

⁷³ John E. Wills, Jr., *Embassies and Illusions: Dutch and Portuguese Envoys to K'ang-hsi*, 1666-1687 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University, 1984), pp. 69, 122, 130-37, 160-61, 164-69.

⁷⁴ Fang Hao, Zhong Xi jiaotongshi, Vol. 5, pp. 11-14.

⁷⁵ Fang Hao, Zhong Xi jiaotongshi, Vol. 5, p. 18.

⁷⁶ Spence, "The Seven Ages of K'ang-hsi", pp. 96-97.

⁷⁷ Fang Hao, *Zhong Xi jiaotongshi*, Vol. 5, p. 12.

⁷⁸ "Journal anonyme du voyage de la Chine fait dans les années 1701, 1702 et 1703", *Révue contemporaine* t. 25 (1856), pp. 6-7, cited in Fang Hao, *Zhong Xi jiaotongshi*, Vol. 5, p. 13.

who had originally been brought to court on the emperor's orders because Ferdinand Verbiest (南懷仁, 1623-1688) had commented on his musicianship, reveals the extent of the Manchu emperor's interest in Western music:

On the third day, he called me to his presence that I might play him some music, in which art he takes special delight. I expounded it from its first elements, to the great satisfaction of all hearers, and to the utmost of my ability, and the emperor paid as much attention as if the fate of his empire were concerned.⁷⁹

Kangxi himself learned to "play the tune P'u-yen-chou [*Pu An Zhou*, 普庵咒] on the harpsichord and the structure of the eight-note scale" from Pereira. ⁸⁰ Gao Shiqi (高士奇, 1645-1703), Kangxi's favourite personal secretary, also testifies to Kangxi's penchant for Western music:

On the afternoon of the eighteenth day of the fourth month [June 2, 1703] His Majesty's servant [Gao Shiqi] was summoned to the Yuan Jian Zhai [渊鉴斋, the imperial library and galleries]... His Majesty talked about the theory of musical instruments, on which he was well informed. He himself played a tune of *Pu An Zhou* on a Western lute of 120 strings, made by the palace engineers. Then he said: "During the Tang and Song dynasties, the Chinese played an instrument called *konghou* (箜篌), but the method of playing was lost. Now we have restored it.⁸¹

Kangxi not only learned to play the harpsichord from Pereira but also instructed Theodorico Pedrini, ambassador of the Holy See in China since 1711, to teach his sons to play the instrument and music theory. He also ordered three of his sons to work with Pedrini on a book about music in order to understand the fundamentals of music theory and origins of various musical instruments with a view to improve Chinese music.⁸²

The Kangxi emperor's close attention to music and his cosmopolitanism were not unexpected. They owed much to his upbringing and the kind of court environment he was in. When he ascended the throne in 1662 as a seven year-old child, he was under the competing influences of a variety of pressure groups, including the Jesuits. Being an alien ruler governing an empire that was dominantly Chinese, the emperor's friendliness toward the Westerners was naturally enhanced by his own racial background. Yet Kangxi's cosmopolitan inclination does not mean his interest in music was free from traditional Confucian utilitarian influence. On

⁷⁹ Pierre Joseph d'Orléans, *History of the Two Tartar Conquerors of China, From the Dutch of Nicolaas Witsen*, translated and edited by the Earl of Ellesmere (London: Hakluyt society, 1854, Reprint New York, B. Franklin, 1971), pp. 132-33.

⁸⁰ J. D. Spence, Emperor of China: Self-Portrait of K'ang-hsi (New York: Vintage Books, 1988), p. 73.

⁸¹ Gao Shiqi, *Pengshan mijil*《蓬山密記》/*Private Notes of Gao Shiqi* in the *Guxue huikanl*《古學匯刊》, ce 12, pp. 1a-4b. Cited in Fu Lo-shu, *A Documentary Chronicle of Sino-Western Relations (1644-1820)*, 2 Vols. (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1966), pp. 112-13. For a biographical sketch of Gao, see Hummel ed., *Eminent Chinese of the Ching Period*, Vol. 1, pp. 413-15.

⁸² Fang Hao, *Zhong Xi jiaotongshi*, Vol. 5, pp. 16, 20. See also Spence, *Emperor of China*, p. 73. For a critical study of Kangxi's sons education in Western music, see Yu, Siu Wah/余少華, "Kangxi di dui qi huangzi de yinyue jiaoyu jiqi yingxiang/康熙帝对其皇子的音樂教育及其影响/Emperor Kangxi and the Music Education of His Sons and Its Impact", in Liu Ching-chih and Li Ming eds., *Zhongguo chuantong yinyue jiaoyu yantaohui lunwen ji*/中國傳統音樂教育研討會論文集/Proceedings of the International Seminar on Traditional Music Education in China) (Hong Kong: University of Hong Kong, 1999), pp. 125-43.

the contrary, his interest in music was motivated as much by his appreciation of the advanced techniques of Western music as by his understanding of the Confucian notion of music as a means of social and political persuasion. As Pratt has rightly pointed out:

Like Louis XIV the Kangxi Emperor took a personal interest in music and was aware of its value to the securing of his rule. Echoing the lessons of the *Yue Ji* [《樂記》, *The Book of Music*], he said, 'Music has the virtue to calm the heart, and for that the wise man loves it.' Besides, in diverting himself with it he may exercise himself in governing well, by an easy and just application of the government in music.⁸³

In this regard, the Kangxi emperor was clearly no different from the missionaries who deployed music in the first place.

To be sure, a ruler's concern for correct music had always been the dominant theme throughout the history of China. But what distinguished Kangxi from other emperors was his practical involvement. The emperor "showed an active concern for it in practical ways, giving instructions for example on the cultivation and selection of bamboos for use in the manufacture of musical instruments, a scholarly interest in its history, theory and performance." In this regard the Kangxi emperor is exceptional and his musical endeavours are only paralleled by a few other Chinese monarchs.

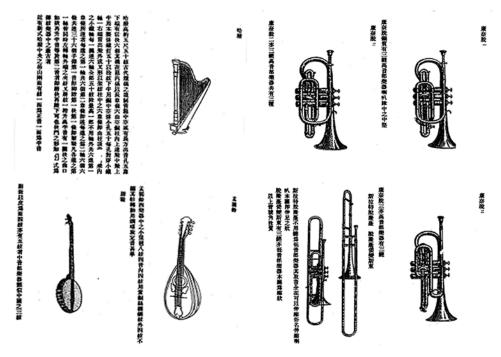


Fig. 1:1. Some of the Western Musical Instruments contained in the *Qichao Xu wenxian tongkaol* 《清朝續文献通考》. Cited in Han Guohuang, *Zi xi cu dong*, Vol. 2.

⁸³ Keith Pratt, "Art in the Service of Absolutism: Music at the Courts of Louis XIV and the Kangxi Emperor", *The Seventeenth Century*, Vol.7, No. 1 (1992), p. 100.

Pratt, "Art in the Service of Absolutism", p. 100.

⁸⁵ The Ming emperor of the Tang dynasty springs to mind. See Kishibe Shigeo/岸邊成雄, "A Chinese Painting of the T'ang Court Women's Orchestra", in *Commonwealth of Music* edited by G. Rees and R. Brandel (New York: The Free Press, 1965), pp. 104-17.

Lülüü Zhengyi and the Introduction of Western Musical Theory

The Kangxi emperor was also known as the first person to show real interest in European musical theory. Elike reformers of Chinese music in the late 1920s and 1930s, he was particularly attracted to the European staff notation. In the following passage written in 1735, Jean-Baptiste Du Halde (1674-1743) described in a rather fanciful manner how Thomas Pereira intrigued the Manchu ruler with a practical test performed with a fellow Jesuit, Philippe Grimaldi (閔明我, 1638-1712), and how the music encyclopaedia *Lülüü zhengyi* (《律吕正義》, *The True Doctrine of the Pitches*) which included a treatise on European notation came to be commissioned:

The ease wherewith we are able to take down an Air at only once hearing it, by the Assistance of Notes, extremely surpriz'd that Monarch, who in the Year 1679 sending for P. *Grimaldi* and P. *Pereira* to play upon the Organ and Harpsichord, which they had formerly presented him with, he liked our *European* Airs, and seemed to take great Pleasure in them. Then he ordered his Musicians to play a *Chinese* Air upon one of their Instruments, and play'd himself in a very graceful Manner. In the meantime P. *Pereira* took his Pocket Book.... and pricked down all the Tune, while the musicians were playing...; and when they had made an End, repeated it as perfectly as if he had practised it long before, without missing one Note: This so surprised the Emperor, that he could scarcely believe it. He Bestowed great commendations on the Justness, Harmony facility of the *European* Music; But above all admired the Missionary had in so short a time learned an air which had given him and his Musicians no small Trouble; and that by help of certain Characters he was become so thoroughly master of it, that it was not possible for him to forget it.

To be the more sure of this, he made several farther Trials, and sung many different Airs, which the Jesuit pricked..., and repeated immediately after with the greatest Exactness: *It must be owned*, cried the Emperor, *the* European *Music is incomparable*, and *this Father*, [speaking of P. Pereira] *has not his Equal in all the Empire*. This Prince afterwards established an Academy for Music, composed of all those who were most skilled in the Science, and committed it to the Care of his third Son, who was a Man of letters, and had read a great deal. They began by examining all the Authors that had written on this Subject, causing all sorts of Instruments to be made, after the ancient Manner, and according to settled Dimensions. These instruments appearing faulty, they were corrected by the more modern Rules, after which they compiled a Book in four Volumes with this title: *The True Doctrine of the* LI HI [*Lülüü zhengyi*]..., *written by the emperor's order*. To these they added a fifth, containing all the Elements of *European* Music, composed by P. *Pereira*. 88

⁸⁶ Gerlinde Gild, "The Introduction of European Musical Theory during the Early Qing Dynasty", in Roman Malek ed., *Western Learning and Christianity in China* (Sankt Augustin: Monumenta Serica Institute, 1998), Vol. 2, p. 1190.

⁸⁷ Lülüü zhengyi is also translated as the "Rectification of the Twelve Pitches." See Ye Xiaoqing, "Ascendant Peace in the Four Seas: Tributary Drama and the Macartney Mission of 1793", *Late Imperial China*, Vol. 26, No. 2 (December 2005), p. 91, n9. *Lülüü zhengyi* has been the subject of a PhD thesis. See Gerlinde Gild-Bohne, "Das Lü-Lü-Zheng-Yi-Xubian: ein Jesuitentraktat über die europäische Notation in China 1713". Orbis musicarum. 8 (Göttingen University, 1990).

⁸⁸ Jean-Baptiste Du Halde, Description géographique, historique, chronologique, politique et physique de l'Empire de la Chine & de la Tartarie chinoisel A Description of the Empire of China and Chinese-Tartary, Together with the Kingdoms of Korea, and Tibet (Paris: La Haye, H. Scheurleer, 1735), trans. R, Brookes (London: 1738, 1741). Excerpted in Frank Ll Harrison, ed., Time, Place and Music: An Anthology of

Discounting the obvious exaggeration, the compilation of the afore-mentioned *Lülüü Zhengyi* was indeed ordered by the Kangxi emperor. First compiled in 1713, it consisted of three *bian* volumes: *shangbian* (上編), *xiabian* (下編), and *xubian* (續編). It was books of a three-part compendium on astronomy (*Lixiang kaochangl* 《歷象考成》, in 42 *juan* volumes), mathematics (*Shuli jingyunl* 《數理精蘊》, in 53 *juan* volumes), and music (*Lülüü zhengyil* 《律吕正義》, in 5 *juan* volumes), known collectively as *Lüli yuanyuan* (《律歷淵源》, *Source of Pitch-pipes and the Calendar*). Kangxi had commissioned the compendium when he founded the Office of Mathematics (*suanxueguan*, 算學館). ⁸⁹ The compendium was printed in 1723 under the editorship of He Guozong (何國宗, d.1766), Mei Gucheng and Fang Bao (方苞, 1668-1749) with two of Kangxi's sons, Yinzhi (胤祉, 1677-1732) and Yinlu (胤禄, 1695-

1767) in charge. 90 The fifth juan volume or the third bian (xubian) of the Lülüü zhengyi, which deals exclusively with European music, was the work of Thomas Pereira and Theodore Pedrini.91 In this volume, Pereira and Pedrin explained such concepts as the stave; the signs; names for solmisation (i.e. ut, re, mi, fa, so, la); the clefs; the modes; the half-tone; the values of notes; different kinds of measure; the metre; the rests; and so on. 92 Recent Chinese scholarship has shown that this volume was based on an earlier teaching manual *Lülüü zuanyao* (《律吕纂要》, *The Elements of Music*, 1707) used by Pereira to instruct Kangxi and his sons in Western music theory. During the reign of the Qianlong (乾 隆) emperor (r.1736-1795), the xubian was revised and greatly enlarged (120 juan). In 1748 this revised volume, known as houbian (後編), was incorporated into the *jingbu* (經 部) or the "classics" section of the imperial collection the *Siku quanshu* (《四庫全書》).



Fig. 1:2. A page of the *Lülüü zhengyi* (xubian)

Ethnomusicological Observation c. 1550 to c. 1800 (Amsterdam: Frits Knuf, 1973), pp. 163-164.

⁸⁹ Catherine Jami, "Imperial Control and Western Learning: The Kangxi Emperor's Performance", Vol. 23, No. l (2002), p. 39.

⁹⁰ For biographical sketches of He Guozong, Yinzhi and Yinlu by Fang Chao-ying, see Hummel ed., *Eminent Chinese of the Ch'ing Period*, Vol. 1, pp. 285-86; 922-23; 925-26.

⁹¹ Fang Chao-ying, "Ho Kuo-tsung", in *Hummel, Eminent Chinese of the Ch'ing Period*, Vol. 1, p. 285.

⁹² For musicological studies of the book, see Wang Zhenya/王震亚, "Xiyang yueli shuru tanyuan/西洋乐理输入探源", *Yinyue yanjiu*, No. 4 (1990), pp. 58-62; Kii-Ming Lo, "New Documents on the Encounter between European and Chinese Music", *Revista de Musicologia*, Vol. 16, No. 4 (1993), pp. 17-21.

Western Music at the Imperial Court of the Qianlong Emperor

With the problems caused by the rites controversy, the death of Kangxi in 1722 and the subsequent proscription of Christianity in China by Yongzheng (雍正, r.1723-36) in 1724, the Jesuits lost much of their influence and consequently Western music lost much of its appeal.⁹³ The kind of patronage the Kangxi ruler had shown to the Jesuits was certainly no more. But this setback did not spell the end of the Manchu court's fascination with Western music. In the early years of the Qianlong's reign (r. 1736-95) not only European instrumental music enjoyed a minor revival, European operatic form also made its appearance in China.⁹⁴ Despite the increased visits of foreign envoys, missionaries continued to be the main caterers to Qianlong's erratic interest. Apart from the above-mentioned Pedrini, Jesuits missionaries who were musically active during the period of Qianlong included Florianus Bahr (魏継晉, 1706-1771), Johannes Walter (鲁仲賢, 1708-1759), J. J. M. Amiot (錢德明, 1718-1793), a few Italian Jesuits, and a French Jesuit named Jean-Baptiste Joseph de Grammont (梁棟材, 1736-1808). Pedrini, apart from his role in completing the Lülüü zhengyi xubian, was also responsible for composing a sonata for violin.95 Bahr and Walter were among a number of the Jesuit missionaries who served as music instructors and organs and musical clock repairmen at the court of Qianlong. According to the Jesuit chronicler Louis Pfister (1833-1891), Bahr and Walter, in response to an imperial order, organised a choir of 18 young palace eunuchs and instructed them in singing and chanting.⁹⁶ They also collaborated in composing music and lyrics, 16 songs for use at the imperial palace. 97 Bahr and Walter were also responsible for directing the small Western orchestra maintained by the Qing court in the decade between 1740 and 1750.98 The Italian Jesuits were responsible for the staging of the Italian composer Nicola Piccini's comic opera La Cecchina, which premiered in Rome in 1760, at the Qing palace in 1878.99

But unlike his grandfather Kangxi, Qianlong's interest in Western music, like his interest in things Western, was not consistent. A number of scholars, Fang Hao (方豪) and Liao Fushu (廖輔叔) in particular, have pointed out the fickle nature of Qianlong's interest in European music. 100 In 1743 Qianlong all of sudden lost his interest in Western music. 101 With

⁹³ For works on the rites controversy and its consequences, see George Minimaki, *The Rites Controversy, from Its Beginnings to Modern Times* (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1985), and D. E. Mungello, ed., *The Chinese Rites Controversy: Its History and Meaning* (Nettetal: Steyler Verlag, 1994).]

⁹⁴ Fang Hao, *Zhong Xi jiaotongshi*, Vol. 5, pp. 19-22; Liao Fushu/廖輔叔, "Qianlong gongting yinyue zhong de yang wanyi/乾隆宫廷音樂中的洋玩意/Foreign Music at the Court of Qianlong", in *Yinyue yanjiu*, No. 1 (1990), pp. 51-53.

⁹⁵ Fang Hao, Zhong Xi jiaotongshi, Vol. 5, pp. 18-19.

⁹⁶ Louis Pfister, S.J., *Notices Biographiques et Biographiques sur les Jésuites de l'ancienne mission de Chine,* 1552-1773 (Chang-hai: Imprimerie de La Mission Catholique, 1932).

⁹⁷ Fang Hao, *Zhong Xi jiaotongshi*, Vol. 5, p. 20.

⁹⁸ Liao Fushu, "Qianlong gongting yinyue zhong de yang wanyi", pp. 51-53.

⁹⁹ Fang Hao, Zhong Xi jiaotongshi, Vol. 5, p. 21.

¹⁰⁰ Fang Hao, *Zhong Xi jiaotongshi*, Vol. 5, p. 20-21. Liao Fushu, "Qianlong gongting yinyue zhong de yang wanyi", pp. 51-53.]

¹⁰¹ Wu Xiangxiang/吳相湘, "Diyi bu zhongwen xiyang yuelishu/第一部中文西洋樂理書/The Earliest Chinese Book on Western Musical Theory)", in *Jindai shishi luncong*/《近代史事論叢》/*Essays on Modern*

the emperor losing interest in Western music, the Jesuits in Beijing saw no point in wasting too much of their time on the introduction of Western music. Some of them, such as J. J. M. Amiot, began to concentrate on the study of Chinese music, producing the earliest European study of Chinese music: *Mémoire sur la musique des Chinois* (Paris, 1779).¹⁰²

Conclusion

The above overview shows that while the origins of China's exposure to European music may go back for many centuries, the first sustained exposure, with tangible results, did not occur until the late Ming. Like in Japan, Christian missionaries were the main carriers of Western musical culture to China and the introduction of Western music in China was very much the result of Christian global expansion. But differing from Japan, where "Christian chant and music seem to have captivated all social classes from the very first," ¹⁰³ the scope of transmission in China prior to the Opium War was very much limited. As seen above, only the highest social classes and a small number of Catholic converts were exposed to Western music.

The limited circulation of Western music among the Chinese population can be seen as a partial result of the attitudes of the Ming and Qing ruling classes towards Western learning. Take Kangxi's case as an example, the Qing ruler was utilitarian in his approach to Western music, viewing it as a practical means (yong, 用), not as essence (ti, 軆). On a personal level, he might have viewed Western music as more advanced in some respects than the traditional Chinese yayue (雅樂, ritual music). But as a monarch he was not convinced that Western music was useful enough to warrant a formal introduction. His willingness to have his sons taught Western music only demonstrates his flexibility and open-mindedness.

On the part of Chinese social and political elite, Western music was seen no more than an object of curiosity. Unlike in later years, they did not see Western music as an emblem of modernity. Nor did they see it as a means to a practical end. So there was no imperative for its introduction to China.

In a recent study of Kangxi and Western learning, Catherine Jami has argued that rather than popularising Western learning the Kangxi emperor "monopolised" it as a means of controlling the heaven, the earth and men. 104 Ye Xiaoqing has also argued that Qianlong's interest in European goods derived from his "eagerness for monumental glory." 105 This may partially explain why Western music failed to take hold in China until the early decades of the twentieth century in spite of its early presence. Fang Hao and Liao Fushu certainly believe the monopoly of Western music by Kangxi and Qianlong was the reason for the limited circulation

History (Taibei: Zhuanji wenxue chubanshe, 1978), p. 394. Fang Hao, Zhong Xi jiaotongshi, Vol. 5, p. 21.

¹⁰² Fang Hao, Zhong Xi jiaotongshi, Vol. 5, pp. 20-22. For an account of Amiot and his work on Chinese music, see Chen Yanxia (Tchen Ysia)/陳艳霞, Huayue xichuan Falanxil《華樂西傳法蘭西》(Beijing: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1998), pp. 44-208. Originally written as a doctorial thesis entitled La Musique Chinoise en France in 1948, this book was published in French (Paris: Publication Orientaliste de France, 1974) and translated into Chinese by Geng Sheng (耿昇).

¹⁰³ Harich-Schneider, A History of Japanese Music, p. 446.

¹⁰⁴ Jami, "Imperial Control and Western Learning," p. 44.

¹⁰⁵ Ye Xiaoqing, "Ascendant Peace in the Four Seas," p. 102.

of Western music in China. As far as Western musical theory is concerned, the impact of the Lülü zhengyi, as most Chinese music historians and musicologists tend to agree, is negligible in spite, or rather because, of the imperial weight behind its compilation and its inclusion in the Siku quanshu. In other words, because it was written to the emperor's order for the sake of controlling knowledge, "its entire terminology has never entered Chinese musical practice." 107

The minimal impact that the introduction of Western music had in China during the late Ming and early Qing periods also had much to do with the strategies adopted by the Jesuits. Instead of working among the Chinese masses, as did their nineteenth-century Protestant counterparts, the Catholic Jesuits adopted a policy of converting from the top down, giving priority to the conversion of emperors and officials of high rank. Different philosophies resulted in different actions. Instead of preaching in street chapels, visiting homes of the poor, funding schools, orphanages, and hospitals for the destitute, the Jesuits on the whole spent much of their time and energy studying the Chinese classics and in the services of the Chinese officialdom. In contrast to the Protestant missionaries' absolute confidence in the superiority of their culture, the Jesuits did their best to adapt themselves to the Chinese way of life, and cultivated connections with the Chinese social and political elites. Their relative invisibility and their inattention to the Chinese masses was one of the reasons for the limited diffusion of Western music at this time.

Besides, there were cultural and aesthetic reasons for the limited diffusion of Western music in China at this time. The Jesuits may have succeeded in arousing the interest of the emperors and small segment of Chinese society in European music by virtue of its superior manufacturing techniques and notational system, but on the whole they failed to impress the wider Chinese populace as an art of aesthetic enjoyment. As one Jesuit noted:

They like the European music well enough, provided these be only one voice to accompany the instruments... But as for the most curious Part of Music, I mean the Contrast of different Voices, of grave and acute Sounds, Dieses, Fugues, and Syncopes, they are not at all agreeable to their Taste, appearing to them a confused Discord.¹⁰⁹

J. J. M. Amiot also tells us that during his first years in Beijing in the 1750s, he played Les Sauvages and Les Cyclopes by Rameau and pieces for flute by Blavet to learned Chinese persons. They reacted by saying, "The tunes of our music go from the ear to the heart, and from the heart to the soul; we feel them, we understand them. Those you have just played do not have that effect upon us." 110

¹⁰⁶ Fang Hao, *Zhong Xi jiaotongshi*, Vol. 5, p. 22; Liao Fushu, "Qianlong gongting yinyue zhong de yang wanyi", pp. 51-53.

¹⁰⁷ Kii-Ming Lo, "New Documents on the Encounter between European and Chinese Music", pp. 20-21.

¹⁰⁸ This is not to say that Protestant missionaries did not consider cultivating connections with the Chinese social and political elites as an effective way of Christianising China. Timothy Richard, Young J. Allen, W. A. P. Martin, and Gilbert Reid, to name just a few, certainly made conscious efforts in this regard.

¹⁰⁹ Du Halde, Description géographique, historique, chronologique, politique et physique de l'Empire de la Chine & de la Tartarie chinoise, excerpted in Frank Ll. Harrison, ed., Time, Place and Music: An Anthology of Ethnomusicological Observations c. 1550 to c. 1800 (Amsterdam: Frits Knuf, 1973), pp. 162-163.

¹¹⁰ Quoted in Frank Ll. Harrison, "Observation, Elucidation, Utilization: Western Attitudes to Eastern

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