



Music (17th and 18th centuries)

François Picard

► To cite this version:

François Picard. Music (17th and 18th centuries). Nicolas Standaert. Handbook of Christianity in China (vol. 1), E.J. Brill, pp.851-860, 2001, Handbook of Oriental Studies. halshs-00278353

HAL Id: halshs-00278353

<https://shs.hal.science/halshs-00278353>

Submitted on 12 May 2008

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PICARD, François, "Music (17th and 18th centuries)", in Prof. N. Standaert (ed.), *The Handbook of Oriental Studies, Christianity in China* (vol. 1), Leiden, E.J. Brill, 2001, pp. 851–860.

Western music, be it instruments, concerts or theory, has influenced Chinese music or musical life only since the 1910s. During the first centuries of contact, there was mutual interest and curiosity, but even more an awareness of the differences between the respective systems. In contradistinction to the policy held by Jesuits in South America, especially in Paraguay, Jesuits in China did not attempt to mix the two cultures. Yet, their missionary strategy did not exclude Western music, which if accepted by people at the court might positively influence the Emperor himself towards other Western achievements

Western instruments and music

Not long after their arrival in 1583, the missionaries founded a church in Zhaoqing 肇慶, and Western instruments caused great sensation¹. There were organs and keyboard strings instruments in Macao as early as 1601.² Matteo Ricci (Li Madou 利瑪竇, 1552–1610) brought musical instruments as gift to the Wanli 萬曆 emperor twice, first on his arrival in Beijing in 1598, but without success, then on his return to Beijing in 1601. These instruments featured a string instrument called by Ricci *gravicembolo*³ or *manicordio*⁴ and, in Chinese, among other names, "Western string instrument" *xiqin* 西琴. It is not yet quite clear what kind of string instrument this *manicordio* was; it appears to have been most probably a clavichord⁵. On behalf of the Wanli emperor, four eunuchs learned to play the instrument Ricci had given. Diego Pantoja (Pang Diwo 龐迪我 c. 1571–1618, in Macao in 1597) was asked to teach them music at the Palace, but after one month of study, they could hardly play one piece⁶. Ricci wrote eight songs for the harpsichord *Xiqin quyi* 西琴曲意, now lost except for the texts, of moral more than of Christian content⁷. Adam Schall von Bell (Tang Ruowang 湯若望 1591–1666, arrived in 1630) was latter ordered to repair the instrument (*o cravo*) given by Ricci and to translate the Latin psalm-verse written on it.⁸ Schall von Bell also wrote a lesson for keyboard instrument in Chinese accompanied by a few psalm melodies.⁹ The historian Tan Qian 談遷, who visited Schall in 1654, saw an instrument (*tianqin* 天琴) with 45 strings and 45 keys.¹⁰ Since some Chinese sources describe an instrument with 72 strings,¹¹ which were struck,¹² it is clear that several keyboard strings instruments had been brought, mostly harpsichords.

Among European instruments which were brought to China, keyboard strings instruments aroused substantial interest. The Kangxi 康熙 emperor himself is said to have played a Chinese tune on an instrument with 120 metal strings¹³, and that some of his own sons as well as eunuchs were taught to play it. In 1671, Kangxi asked Ferdinand Verbiest (Nan Huairan 南懷仁 1623–1688, arrived in 1659) to teach him music; the latter had Tomé Pereira (Xu Risheng 徐日升 1645–1708, arrived in 1673) come especially for it from Macao.

The first description of an organ, an instrument previously unknown, is found in Giulio Aleni's (Ai Rulüe 艾儒略) *Zhifang wai ji* 職方外紀 (1623), which reports on the organ in the cathedral of Toledo (Spain)¹⁴. Pereira built an organ for the Nantang 南堂 church at Beijing as well as a set of bells which chimed automatically¹⁵. Wu Changyun 吳長元 in his *Chenyuan shilüe* 宸垣識略 (1788) gives a description of this organ.¹⁶

Not a few missionaries were good instrumentalists, and had brought Western instruments with them which they played at the court. The most eminent musician among them was Teodorico Pedrini CM (De Lige 德理格 1671–1746), an Italian who, being exceptionally gifted and well-trained in music, was therefore sent by Propaganda Fide to China to please Kangxi. After his arrival in Beijing (February 1711), he endured a difficult life as a courtier who served three emperors, was imprisoned, but succeeded in building two new organs and teaching some of Kangxi's sons. Under the pseudonym of Nepridi, he left a manuscript with a set of twelve Italian-style sonatas, entitled *Sonate a Violino Solo col Basso del Nepridi, Opera Terza* and preserved in the Beitang Library. They were possibly influenced by Arcangelo Corelli (1653–1713) who was active in Rome when Pedrini was studying there.¹⁷ Apart from this sonatas, very few Western scores are documented as having been brought to China.¹⁸ An exception was a famous opera by Niccolò Piccinni (1728–1800), *La Cecchina*, played at the imperial court soon after its (Italian) premiere in 1760. It pleased the Qianlong emperor so much that he had a stage built and established a troupe to play it again and again.¹⁹

Western theory of music

On the level of Western theory of music, the most important introduction was *Lülü zuanyao* 律呂纂要 (Compilation of Musical Theory) written by Tomé Pereira on behalf of the Kangxi emperor, and completed after Pereira's death by Pedrini.²⁰ The work was revised and partly integrated as the last part of *Lülü zhengyi xubian* 律呂正義續編, the supplement to the imperial encyclopedia on music *Lülü zhengyi* 律呂正義 (part of *Lülü yuanyuan* 淵源, 1723).²¹ It features a presentation of the tonal system, rhythmic and staff notation, and is a good example of the difficulties involved in translating musical terminology from a European into a Chinese tradition.

Liturgical music

Another interesting testimony for the blending of Chinese and Western music certainly is liturgical music. The first record of a Mass accompanied by is the Christmas celebration in Beijing in 1604.²² Organ (or *régale*)²³ and other instruments were played in Sciala (Shanlan 珊欄) at Ricci's funerals on 22 April 1611.²⁴ On this occasions, however, one may have played merely Western music and instruments. The first indications for Chinese liturgical music date of a century later. In 1710, Wu Li SJ 吳歷 Yushan 漁山 (1632–1718), a famous painter and poet, wrote his *Tianyue zhengyin pu* 天樂正 in Mary, others recounting

or even dramatising moments in the Old Testament, and were to be sung on traditional Chinese tunes, mostly in *yiqiang* 弋腔 style.²⁵

Joseph Marie Amiot (Qian Deming 錢德明, Toulon 1718 – Beijing 1793, in Beijing since 1751) compiled a collection of sacred music *Shengyue jing pu* 聖樂經譜 containing thirteen liturgical songs in Chinese. In 1779, he sent this collection to “monsieur Bignon, bibliothécaire du Roi”.²⁶ Most of these songs are prayers already translated during the late Ming (attributed to Niccolò Longobardo 龍華民 1565–1655) and found in the official prayer-books (*Shengjiao rike* 聖教日課). The title of these prayers are: (1) Prayer at the Asperersion with Holy Water, (2) Prayer at the beginning of a service, (3) Our Father, (4) Hail Mary, (5) Salve Regina, (6) Sanctissima, (7) Prayer for the Holy Sacrament, (8) Act of Humility, (9) Prayer at the Elevation of the Host, (10) Prayer at the Elevation of the Chalice, (11) Prayer at Communion, (12) Prayer to Jesus Christ, (13) Prayer at the End of a service.²⁷ The music, purely Chinese, and in a style related to *Nan Bei qu* 南北曲, was written by Chinese, among them Manchu Ma André (died in 1768), a member of the Congregation of Musicians at the Beitang (Northern Church) in Beijing. The absence of a Kyrie or Gloria in Chinese is due to the fact that during the 1750s and 1770s Propaganda Fide had forbade the singing in Chinese of parts of the Mass such as the Kyrie, Gloria, etc., proposed by missionaries in Beijing and Sichuan. Only prayers which did not belong to the liturgy of the Mass itself could be sung in Chinese by those who attended Mass but not by the priest and his assistants.²⁸

On Chinese music

The early reports on Chinese music to Europe are scarce and not very positive.

On March 3rd, 1599 or March 16, 1600, Ricci heard a Confucian ceremony with music in Nanking²⁹ Ricci also made comments on Taoist music, where he found great *disconsonantia*.³⁰

In the eighteenth century, the two main sources that introduced Chinese theory of music, music and scores into Europe, mainly France, are letters³¹ published in 1735 and an unpublished manuscript from 1754 by Joseph Marie Amiot.³² The latter had been previously and mistakenly looked upon for during years as a supposed translation of Li Guangdi 李光地 *Gu Yuejing zhuan* 古樂經傳 (1708) [1727], while it was in fact an original work. These were followed in 1776–1779 by other important writings by Amiot who also sent Chinese instruments and scores.³³ Amiot compiled a series of Chinese musical scores in *gongchepu* 工尺譜 notation, also translated into some kind of staff notation, which present suites (*Divertissements*) that were played at the court and whose style is related to the tradition of *Shifan* 十番.³⁴

Musicology and history of musical exchanges

Numerous records, mostly from the Western side, relate how Jesuits played Western music and the reaction of Chinese listeners. The Jesuits also played Chinese music on their own instruments, and it is said that some Chinese, including Kangxi himself,³⁵ played

Chinese music on Western instruments. No record exists, however, of Westerners having played Chinese instruments.

The first book in Chinese about Western music was published as early as 1713, while the first Western study of Chinese music was written in 1754. Both included musical scores, theory, history, explanation of the respective musical systems, and both were written by Christian missionaries, respectively Pereira and Amiot. But the first study in a Western language about musical exchanges between China and the West, by Tchen, was not published until 1974, while its Chinese counterpart, by Tao, only dates from 1994.

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CD

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¹ FR I, p. 259, NN 310–312. *Histoire*, p. 276.

² Wang Linheng 王臨亨, *Yuejian bian* 粵劍編, c. 1601, (*Yuan Ming shiliao biji congkan* 元明史料筆記叢), Beijing, Zhonghua shuju, 1987 (repr. 1997), p. 92; cf. Tao Yabing, p. 52.

³ FR, vol. II, p. 29. *Histoire*, p. 395, has "régales", which is either an organ or a xylophone.

⁴ FR, vol. II, pp. 39, 102, 114, 132, 134, 426. *Histoire*, pp. 403, 461, 605, has "épinette", Pantoja, FR II, p. 124, n, has "un muy buen monacordio". Schall, FR II, p. 132 n. 2, has "clavicembalo".

⁵ See Marco Tiella, "About *manacordo* [sic] and *sordino*", Fellowship of Makers and Researchers of Historical Instruments *FoMRHI Quarterly* N° 81, October 1995, p. 33.

⁶ FR, II, pp. 132–135.

⁷ Pasquale d'Elia, 1945. Id., 1950. Cf. Jonathan D. Spence, *The Memory Palace of Matteo Ricci*, London & Boston, Faber and Faber, 1985, pp. 197–199.

⁸ Letter from P. Furtado to P. Francisco Sambiasi, May 17, 1640 (ARSI Jap.Sin. 142 n°4), in Bernard, Mon.Ser. 1938, p. 497. Vāth 1991, p. 125. Johann Adam Schall von Bell, 1672, reprint. 1942, p. 47.

⁹ Cf. Schall von Bell, loc. cit.

¹⁰ Tan Qian, 46. See Lindorff 1994, pp. 3–4. See Albert Chan, “Johann Adam Schall in the *Pei-yu lu* of T'an Ch'ien and in the Eyes of his Contemporaries”, in *Schall Conference vol.* (1998), I, p. 277 (cf. end of note 3, pp. 277–278).

¹¹ *Xu Wenxian tongkao*, j. 120, 1936, pp. 3873–3874; see Fang Hao 1983, vol. 2, p. 889, Tao 1994, p. 39.

¹² Feng Shike (1547–1617), c. 1620, vol. 28, j. 17, f. 1b–2b. See *Shuofu sanzong* 說郭三種, Shanghai, Guji chubanshe, 1988, vol. 9, pp. 810–812.

¹³ Gao Shiqi (1744–1703), III, j. 2, 3b–4a, speaking about June 2, 1703.

¹⁴ Aleni, Giulio (Ai Rulüe 艾儒略), *Zhifang wai ji* 職方外紀, Hangzhou, 1623, in *Mohai jinhu* 墨海金壺 and in Li Zhizao 李之藻 (ed.), *Tianxue chuhan* 天學初函, 1628, j. 2, f. 8b, repr. Taipei, Taiwan xuesheng, 1965, p. 1378. Ai Rulüe, 1623, in Li Zhizao, 1966, p. 54. Ferdinand Verbiest, *Kunyu tushuo* 坤輿圖說, Beijing, 1674, in fact *Kunyu quantu* 坤輿全圖 (anonymous, without indication of place or date BNF Chinois 1914. “acquisition faite chez les jésuites en 1763”) has *fengqin* 風琴 instead of Aleni's *bianxiao* 編簫. Also in *Qingchao Wenxian tongkao* 清朝文獻通考, *juan 177 yue* 樂 23, Wang Yunwu 王雲五 (ed.), Shanghai, Shangwu, 1936, vol. 2, 6383.

¹⁵ Golvers 1993, pp. 124–126 and 316, n. 19–21. Du Halde III, p. 112, 270.

¹⁶ Zhao Yi 趙翼 (1727–1814), *Yanpu zaji* 檐曝雜記 vol. 2. Wu Changyun 吳長元, *Chenyuan shilüe* 宸垣識略 (1788), reprint Beijing, Guji chubanshe, 1983.

¹⁷ *Catalogue Pé-T'ang* (1969), no. 3397, now kept in the Beijing Library. The manuscript was discovered in 1935, see Feifel, Eugen, “Theo Rühl, ed., *12 sonates de Pedrini pour le violon seul avec basse continue*”, in *Monumenta Serica* II, 1936–37, p. 259. It was photographed by A. B. Duvigneau CM in 1936 for the library of École César Franck (Paris). One sonata was played at Furen University (Beijing) in October 1936 and another at the Salle Gaveau in April 1937. The musical edition made in 1940 (Beijing) by L. Van den Brandt CM did hardly circulate. See Combaluzier, pp. 270–271. Rediscovered by Jean-Christophe Frisch, five of these sonatas were recorded by his ensemble in 1996 (see CD) and one in 1988 (see CD).

¹⁸ See Verhaeren, 1949, n° 785, 1990, 2111, 3147, 3364. And also Joseph Dominique de Cheylus (1771–1799), *Missale Bajocensi...*, 1783, kept in Shanghai Library, Foreign language books N° 405.

¹⁹ Ginguené, Pierre-Louis, *Notice sur la vie et les ouvrages de Niccolò Piccinni*, Paris, an IX (1801), pp. 10–11. The story might not be reliable and one may have performed only the musical part of the opera; see G. Bertuccioli & F. Masini, *Italia e Cina*, Roma: Editori Laterza, 1996, pp. 210–212.

²⁰ Ms. discovered in the Beiping tushuguan by Wu Xiangxiang 吳相湘, who first published his discovery in *Guangzhou da guangbao* 廣州大光報, Novembre 7, 1936, reprint in Wu

Xiangxiang, *Jindai shishi lun cong* 近代史事論, Taipei, Chuanji wenxue 傳記文學, 1987. See Tao 1994, p. 81–95.

²¹ Also included in *Siku quanshu* 四庫全書; there is a German translation by Gerlinde Gild-Bohne (1991); see also Gild (1998).

²² Letter from Matteo Ricci, February 1st, 1605, to P. Ludovico Maselli SJ *OS* II, p. 254 (cf. Henri Bernard, 1937, II, p. 235). Louis Le Comte, letter to de La Chaize, in *Nouveaux mémoires sur l'état présent de la Chine*, Paris, 1696–1700, vol. II, p. 277. Cibot, June 11, 1772, in LEC XXX 1773, pp. 94–114. François Bourgeois, October 15, 1769, *ibid.*, pp. 211–274.

²³ Possibly this "organ" was in fact a "régale".

²⁴ FR II, p. 626, NN. 998. *Histoire*, 1978, p. 689.

²⁵ See Chaves, pp. 48–49, 75–80. Ch'en Yüan, 1938, pp. 130–170b.

²⁶ It has been discovered, transcribed and played in the 1990s (see CD: Frisch & Picard, 1998). Music and texts to be published in *Sanjiao wenxian* 三教文獻 *Matériaux pour l'étude de la religion chinoise*, EPHE/CNWS, Paris–Leiden, 3, 1999.

²⁷ The text of the prayers, numbered 1–5, 9–10 and 13 are found in editions of *Shengjiao rike*; see Paul Brunner, *L'euchologe de la Mission de Chine. Editio princeps 1628 et développements jusqu'à nos jours*, Münster: Aschendorf, 1964, pp. 183–186 (nos 14, 23–24, 28–29, 32–33). See also the undated edition: N. Longobardo, *Tianzhu shengjiao rike* 天主聖教日課 (1665), BNF Chinois 7353–7354. The other prayers apparently are of a later date.

²⁸ Margiotti; cf. N. Kowalsky, "Römische Entscheidungen über den Gebrauch der Landessprache bei der heilige Messe in den Missionene", *NZM* 9 (1953), pp. 241–251, esp. 247–249 (China).

²⁹ FR II, p. 70 n. 5. Not "catholic mass", as I wrote erroneously in Frisch, Jean-Christophe, Picard, François, *Messe des jésuites de Pékin*.

³⁰ FR I, p. 130.

³¹ Du Halde III, pp. 265–267, p. 270.

³² It was recently identified, see François Picard, *Revue Bibliographique de Sinologie*, 1996, pp. 265–272. See Yves LENOIR & Nicolas STANDAERT, *Les Danses rituelles chinoises d'après Joseph-Marie Amiot*, Namur / Bruxelles, Presses Universitaires de Namur / Éditions Lessius, 2005.

³³ Cf. Joseph Dehergne, "Une grande collection: Mémoires concernant les Chinois (1776–1814)", *BEFEO* 72 (1983), pp. 267–297, esp. p. 278.

³⁴ See CD (1998), which in addition to sonatas by Pedrini, also contains suites by Amiot.

³⁵ Gao Shiqi, cf. *supra*.