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► **To cite this version:**

François Picard. Producing sound, hearing sound, reacting to sound: Western and Chinese reactions (1600-1780): Picard CHIME Aarhus. 2014. halshs-01267727

HAL Id: halshs-01267727

<https://shs.hal.science/halshs-01267727>

Preprint submitted on 4 Feb 2016

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Ethnomusicologiques
de Paris
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Aarhus University, Denmark / CHIME,
21-24 August, 2014

Sound, Noise and the Everyday – Soundscapes in contemporary China

category: individual proposal

category: Sounds in Chinese History (or Society) / Chinese Sounds, Foreign Sounds
/ Sound and Music

Producing sound, hearing sound, reacting to sound : Western and Chinese reactions (1600-1780)

François Picard IReMUS, Paris-Sorbonne university

Dedicated to Father Sequeira and all the people at the Macau Ricci Institute who hosted me and Jean-Christophe Frisch in 2004.

Efterhaanden blev da Hørelsen mig den kjæreste Sands; thi ligesom Stemmen er Aabenbarelsen af den for det Ydre incommensurable Inderlighed, saaledes er Øret det Redskab, ved hvilken denne Inderlighed opfattes, Hørelsen den Sands, ved hvilken den tilegnes.

Victor Eremita [Søren Kierkegaard], *Enten - Eller, et livs-fragment*, Kjøbenhavn, 1843, V

Gradually the sense of hearing came to be my favorite sense; for just as the voice is the revelation of the external, incommensurable inwardness, so the ear is the instrument by which this inwardness is apprehended, hearing is the sense by which it is appropriated.

(Eremita/Kierkegaard 1843, transl. Swenson, 1959: 3).

Little by little, hearing became my favorite sense; for just as it is the voice that reveals the inwardness which is incommensurable with the outer, so the ear is the instrument whereby that inwardness is grasped, hearing the sense by which it is appropriated

(Eremita/Kierkegaard 1843, transl. Hannay 1992 Preface: 2).

Introduction

One of the big, Western, introduction to the musicology of China (Robinson 1962) was a chapter where music was classified as “sound”; one of the most complete review of Chinese musical instruments (Moule 1908) is also devoted to “sound-

producing instruments”; the most delicate introduction to Chinese music esthetics have shown the importance of the action of listening (Derk 1959), and of hearing together (DeWoskin 1982, Lam 2006).

Thousands of texts on music, instruments, tunes, life of musicians in Europe show the importance there of doing music, building instruments, creating new works, more than listening to it as part of environment, nature, context.

The method proposed here, “him by you tells me about you” [or “You by me”], is to go to narratives of one listening to the other.

As for the question asked by the organizers “Can we identify a specific Chinese sound?”, the reflection to the remark by Debussy of Puccini as “Italian noise” led me (Picard 2008) previously to a study of music and noise, and to an analytical method to distinguish one from the other.

In examining the listening strategies showed by Chinese and Europeans in contact to each other’s music and sound producing, I shall confront them with the classification proposed by François Delalande (1998, 2013):

“Delalande (1998) led an experiment with experts in electroacoustic music at the GRM [French National Radio Music Research Group], finding out three of what he called “listening behaviors”, of which he thought that they were mutually exclusive: *empathic*, *figurative* and *taxonomic*.” (Marty 2012).

“them by you” means “more about you, more about them, more about me”

Ethnomusicology, as the quest for the way musicians or more largely people from a different culture, a different place, or a different epoch from the observer’s own culture, place, and epoch feel their own music, can benefit from the many ways music and musicians from different places have already encounter each other in the past.

This study of cross-cultural references and exchanges represents a mean to understand the inner characteristics of music. There is no need for ethnomusicology to be limited to the study of traditional music, or to the study of the relations between music and societies, or even to the present, and it can benefit from historical sources as they appear in Asia. The study of the adoption, transformation, rejection of instruments, textures, modes, ways of transmissions has much to gain from the study of music not considered as pure untouched relics from a remote past, but considered as the result of a long process of acceptance and transformation.

Yin, sheng, yue

The way Chinese and European people differently use their ears and react to sound — whether juggled as music / *yinyue* or not — can be exemplified through the cross-hearing of each other’s sonorous production. This can be examined through the various reactions told in their letters, journals, annals, poems. The period of encounter during Ming-Qing dynasties (17th-18th centuries), long-time before the phonograph, provides a case point. One of the striking difference is the way European people constantly base their reactions on the way sound is produced, while the Chinese describe the way the sounds have action on nature and people. Birds, clocks, and bells will particularly be the object of the various reactions. The place of musical instruments will be also examined. A short comparison with the first written reactions (*Tang Huiyao, Xin Tangshu*) by the Chinese listening to foreign music will give a view further back. Sources include images and mainly texts, written in Chinese, Italian, Latin, French, Dutch, Portuguese. The authors include Matteo

Ricci, Nicolas Trigault, Liang Di, Jishan, You Tong, Feng Shike, Giulio Aleni, Francisco Furtado, Tan Qian, Jin Caixiang, Yin Guangren, Johann Adam Schall von Bell, Zhao Yi, Gabriel de Magalhães, Lagrange, Gao Shiqi, Wu Li, Jean-Baptiste Du Halde, François Bourgeois, Michel Benoist, Pierre Martial Cibot, Joseph Marie Amiot.

Faqi yueqi

Chinese ritual specialists distinguish between musical instruments *yueqi* and ritual instruments *faqj*, although we recognize in the latter many musical instruments. Roughly, the first – lutes, fiddles, flutes – are able to produce melodies, notes, while the latter – bells, drums – are percussion instruments. But as one knows, in China has chimes of bells or of gongs, whose hybrid status is recognized. Also, in the same way we find musical instruments among “ritual instruments”, we find non sonorous instruments among “music instruments” *yueqi*: in the Confucian music for Sacrifices and Concord *Zhonghe shaoyue* banners, plumes, and fake flutes (figure 1) (Amiot 1754 : 71-72).

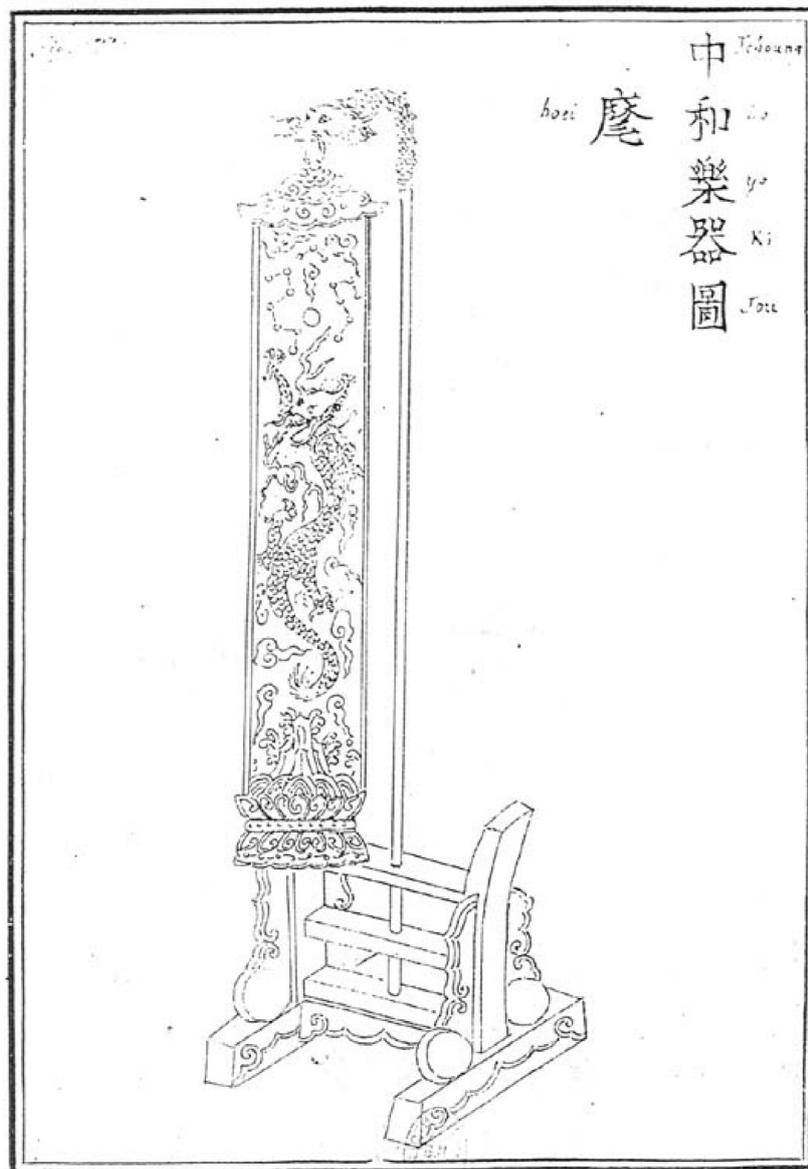


Figure 1 Zhonghe yueqi tu Amiot 1754

After my publication of the Buddhist *Evening Lesson* at the Kaiyuan si temple in Quanzhou, Fujian¹, where I exposed this system, Fañch Thoraval, one of my students, went to study it among the Daoist from Taiwan (Thoraval 2005). Later, Daoist Master Shi Xiaojin, head of Shanghai Baiyun guan, answered to my questions, and even more recently, again in Shanghai, Wang Dan, during the international ICTM meeting, who said: the difference between *faqi* and *yueqi* music is not linked to its sound, or being sonorous or not, it is not symbolic either, but is linked to the performance context: *faqi* music is controlled, fixed, *yueqi* music is movable, adaptable (as for intensity, tempo, duration).



Figure 2 Fanbai *Xixiang ji* (The Western Pavilion)

hanging bell *zhong*, resting bell *qing*, woodblock *muyu*
engraving from *Xixiang ji* (The Western Pavilion) 1610.

802 Tang Huiyao

As early as third century descriptions of musical encounter with foreigners have been transmitted. There is this story of Funan musicians and instruments which impressed Chinese emperor. Then in 7th century, it is Funanese instrument *baopin* which is appreciated, or better said depreciated as “simple and of no use *pulou bukeyong*”. In all these Tang texts [*Tang huiyao*, *juan* 33, p. 620; *Liang shu*], one often finds several aspects: precise description of instruments, including number of chords, precise tuning; categorisation of the sounds (such as nice, weird, vulgar); and cultural comments, such as “music from Funan is related to Indian music”.

¹ Picard 1989.

the statement here is about the description of the instruments

Piao yue! Piao yue tú xuanxuan, buru wén cì chú ráo yān

The music of Piao! The music of Piao is mere noise

Bo Juyi (772-846)².

the statement here is about the quality (I like it or not)

1600 Ricci

Matteo Ricci, Chinese name Li Madou, 1552-1610, arrived in 1582 in Macao; with other Jesuit fathers, he founded in 1583 a “jesuit residence” in Zhaoqing, whose music instruments were appreciated by the Chinese³.

*Molti erano attratti dal horiuolo [...] Dipoi anco vennero instrumenti musici, mai da loro visti.*⁴

*En même rang étaient les instruments de musique, la douceur desquels ne leur plaisaient pas moins que la nouveauté.*⁵

[many were attracted by the clocks... They also praised our musical instruments, which they equally liked]

the statement here is about the pleasure (I like it, and it is new)

On March 3, 1599 — or March 16, 1600, while in Nanjing, Ricci heard a Confucian ritual with music⁶.

*La musica o armonia si faceva per prova del sacrificio del Confuzo [...] Era grandissimo il numero e varietà degli instrumentali che vi erano, e molti di loro che non si possono usare se non in occasi simili. Aluni erano di bronzo, come le **campane**, e campanelle, baccili [cymbals] e altri; altri di pietra e di pelle; altre di corde di leute, altri di flauti; e di organi, ma senza mantici, che con la bocca gli davano il vento; altri erano come animali e con bacchete davano ne' loro denti. E' questi tutti insieme sonavano con il concerto che era possibile dargli; perchè, nel vero, pareva che non avevano nessuna consonantia, e tali che, anco gli stessi Cinesi confessano che si perse tra loro l'arte di questa armonia che avevano gli antichi, e così restano gli nudi stromenti.*⁷

The music or harmony was made for the sacrifice to Confucius. The number and the variety of instruments were very high, and many of them could only be used in such occasions. Some were made of bronze, like the bells large and small, the cymbals and others; others of stone or skin; others with lute strings, others were flutes; and also organs, without bellows, which are played with the mouth; others were in form of animals, with teeth [scraped] by a stick. Together they sounded with as much ensemble as possible but, in fact, it appeared that they had no consonance, so that event the Chinese confessed that they had lost the harmony that they had in the antiquity and only the instruments were left.

the statement here is about the instruments, and the musical system

1601 Liang Di (Macao)

Macao church pipe organ was noticed as soon as 1601 by Chinese litterati⁸. Wang Linheng speaks about its automatic music *ziran yue* [not “from nature”], its hundred reeds and hundred strings.⁹

Chinese poets often evocate São Paulo church, its bells and its organ. Liang Di¹⁰ describes how his friend inspector Lang Yifu heard the sound coming from the church¹¹:

² in *Yuefu shiji* [A Collection of Poems from the Bureau of Music], *juan* 98. 1930. vol. 3: 657-658. Transl. Arthur Waley, in G. E. Harvey 1967: 14-15. cited by Picken.

³ see Tao: 35, after Trigault 1615.

⁴ D'Elia 1942-1949 II: 259.

⁵ Trigault 1615: 276.

⁶ D'Elia 1942-1949 II: 70 n. 5.

⁷ D'Elia 1942-1949 II: 70-71.

⁸ Tao Yabing 1994: 106 sq. *Qingdai Aomen shi zhong guanyu Tianzhujiào de miaoshu* (Elements on Catholicism through Poems from Qing Dynasty) <http://www.macaudata.com/macabook/book213/html/17801.htm> all Web references 13-18 August 2014.

⁹ Wang Linheng 1987: 92. <http://www.macaudata.com/macabook/book213/html/17801.htm>. See Tao Yabing 1994: 52.

Zouzhi Sanba cenglou shang, baili zhi wai xian wen sheng

From the top of St. Paul's, music rises
That can be heard far and wide

[...] It is as soft as scissors cutting silk,
As clear as a goose yelling,
As melodious as a swallow singing,
As saddening as a monkey yelping.

[...]
Like a mighty frozen river running three falls
Cascading down creating a curtain of pearls,
Like thousands of horses galloping in a race
Making the mountain of stalagmites shake

[...]
Like a dragon roaring praises of the crystal palace,
Frightening all fish away in all directions,

[...]
Like a bell ringing a thousand and one times,
Inspiring all humanity and waking up all lives.

Xitang ji (Record of the Western Temple) *Waiguo zhuci ci* (Poem with A Bamboo Stick on Foreigners).
1709.

the statement here is about of sound and the meaning

1610 Feng Shike (Beijing)

Feng Shike (1547-1617), a scholar from Ming dynasty, met Ricci in Beijing, before 1610. In his *Pengchuang xu lu* (Supplementary Record from the Roof), he tells about this meeting: he saw a foreign instrument (*fanqin*), with metal strings (*tiexian*) not plucked by the fingers, but played with small wooden boards; its sound is clear.¹²

the statement here is about description of a musical instrument, and of its sound

1623 Aleni (Toledo)

Giulio Aleni (Brescia 1582-Fuzhou 1649, in Macao in 1610, in China in 1613) (Ai Rulüe), Italian Jesuit, wrote his *Xixuefan* (De studiis et scientiis Europæis), published 1623. He describes the place of music among European sciences. In his geography, the first published in China and in Chinese, *Zhifang wai ji* (*Notitia cosmographica Regnorum totius Orbis* External History from Official Bureau), Hangzhou, 1623, he describes the Spanish church from Toledo, with 36 altars, 2 organs of 32 ranks of 100 pipes each; he also describes the hydraulic organ in Vaticano.¹³

the statement here is about description of musical instruments, not of their sound

1640 Furtado (Beijing)

In May 1640, a harpsichord offered by Ricci in 1601 is discovered in Beijing. Eunuchs bring the instrument to the Emperor, who asks for the meaning of the latin letters¹⁴

¹⁰ In Zhang Wenjin 1997: 144.

¹¹ Zhang Wenjin 1995.

¹² Feng Shike in Tao Ting 1620. vol. 28, *juan* 17, f. 1b-2b.

¹³ Aleni 1623, j. 2, f. 8b. also in Li Zhizao 1966: 54. Also in Ferdinand Verbiest, *Kunyu tushuo* (Explanation of the Map of the World), 1674. *Kunyu quantu* (General Map of the World) has *fengqin* in place of *bianxiao* as Aleni. Also *Wenxian tongkao* (Anthology of Literature), *juan* 177.

¹⁴ Letter from Beijing by F. Furtado to F. Francisco Sambiasi, 17 May 1640 (Archivio Romano della Compagnia di Gesù Jap Sin 142 n°4), in Henri Bernard 1938a and 1938b.

the question here is about the meaning of an inscription on a musical instrument

1640 Schall von Bell (Beijing)

Johann Adam Schall von Bell (Tang Ruowang 1591-1666, in China in 1630), has an old harpsichord sent from Henan, but the death of an old Brother does not permit Schall to finish the building of a new instrument.¹⁵ On 8 September 1640, he presents to the Emperor the harpsichord repaired and tuned, together with a method and a set of Psalms in music.

Je m'appliquai à mettre en chinois la méthode pour en jouer, que j'avais apprise autrefois vaille que vaille. J'y ajoutai quelques mélodies des psaumes, pour rendre la méthode plus claire.¹⁶

the question here is about the building of a musical instrument, the method to play it, and the repertoire.

1654 Tan Qian (Beijing)

Beijing Southern church (Nantang), erected in 1652 at Xuanwumen gate, has two towers; one has an automatic chime which play Chinese style melodies (*Chinese Weise*), the other has an organ.¹⁷

Tan Qian, a scholar, visited the church in 1654. He describes an instrument with 45 strings and a keyboard, but does not mention the organ.¹⁸

the question here is about the description of a musical instrument.

1665 You Tong (Beijing)

In 1665, You Tong (1618-1704) writes about the chime of bells and the instruments with metal strings from Beijing Southern church Nantang.¹⁹

*Tianzhu tang kai tianlai ji
zhong ming qin xiang zi gao di
fuchengmen wai meigui fa
beiguo hai rao Li Taixi*

The Church of the Lord of Heaven opened in silence,
The sound of bells mixes with the organ.

[The catholic church holds a ritual of celestial sounds
Bells sound automatically from deep to high pitches]

Outside the city roses are blooming

I raise my cup to salute Matteo Ricci.

the statement here is about of sound and the meaning

1668 Magalhães (Beijing)

Gabriel de Magalhães S.J. (1610-1677, 1636 in Macao, 1648 in Beijing), wrote an important *Description de la Chine*, whose original, in Portuguese, has been lost, and recently reconstructed from the French. His book has no entry for "music", but it has for "bells".

a delightful concert of voices and instruments
un concert admirable de voix & d'instruments²⁰

¹⁵ D'Elia 1945: 165.

¹⁶ Váth 1991: 125. Schall von Bell 1672/1942: 47.

<http://echo.mpiwg-berlin.mpg.de/ECHOdocuView/ECHOzogiLib?ww=1&ws=1.5&mode=imagepath&url=/mpiwg/online/permanent/library/R9S50RCE/pageimg&pn=1&wh=1>

¹⁷ Váth 1991: 169, quoting Verbiest, *Responsum Apologeticum ad aliqua dubia...*, in *Ecole Ste Geneviève Chine 2*, Rits 1 (Zikawei mss).

¹⁸ Tan Qian. *Beiyu lu*, 1654. See Lindorff 1994: 3-4. Tao 1994: 72.

¹⁹ You Tong 1665. in Id. 1681: 11/17. transl. in Zhang Wenqin 1999: 170. Tao 1994: 73

the statement here is about the quality (I like it or not)

In Beijing one sees in the royal palace a drum and a bell [...]. The palace bell is as big as any I saw in Portugal; but its sound is so brilliant, so pleasant, and so harmonious, that it seem to come less from a bell than from a music instrument²¹

A Pe Kim on voit dans le Palais du Roy un tambour & une cloche. Le tambour de la Ville a de diametre quinze coudées publiques, comme celle que j'ai représentée dans la premiere remarque. La cloche du Palais est aussi grande qu'aucune que j'aye veüe en Portugal ; mais elle a un son si eclatant, si agréable & si harmonieux, qu'il paroît bien moins venir d'une cloche que de quelque instrument de Musique.

Cette cloche est celle qui sert à marquer les heures de la veille ou de la nuit, dans la ville de *Pe Kim*, & je puis assurer avec toute sorte de certitude qu'il n'y en a point dans toute l'Europe qui l'égale; é mesme que selon toutes les apparences elle est la plus grande au monde. Quand on la sonne la nuit, le bruit, ou plutôt le mugissement qu'excite cette terrible machine, est si grand, si plein & si resonnant, qu'après s'estre répandu par toute la Ville, il s'étend pardessus les murailles, dans les Faux-bourgs, & dans toutes les campagnes voisines.

**description of a sonorous instrument, compared to a musical instrument
the statement here is about the quality (I like it or not)**

1684 ~ Wu Xingzuo (Macau)

Wu Xingzuo, "Sanba tang" (The church of São Paulo), *Liu cun shi chao*.²²

*Mo zhi tianwai jiao,
jin shi guo Sanba.
Shu lao duo qiu se,
Chuang xu yin yue hua.
Shui neng qiong ci li,
yi hua san kong hua.
Zuo jiu wang gui qu,
Wen qin si Bo Ya.*

Never did I know a religion from another world,
Till today I saw with my own eyes St Paul's Temple.
Amidst old trees it stands in rich autumn mood,
And its open windows beckon the moon.
Is there anyone to enlighten me on its truth
Which will then be my key to all the mysteries?
I have been sitting pandering, forgetting to go home.
Ah, there goes the melody and Boya, my soul-mate.

the statement here is about the meaning of sound

1700~ Jishan (Macau)

Under Kangxi, the famous painter Cheng Jiu, Jishan as a monk (1637-1722) wrote two poems in admiration for the bells from São Paulo church, praising "the chiming of the clock punctuated by the organ" (*liu shi zhong fengqin*)²³:

Shanzhong jinjie Sanba si, haiqi qingfen shizi men
The mountain bell arrives to São Paulo church, the oceanic air refreshes the Christians.

the statement here is about the quality of sound (coming from far away)

1718 Wu Li (Macau)

Famous painter and poet, Wu Li (poetry name Yushan) (1632-1718), also known as Mojing daoren, became a catholic (1676), a Jesuit (1682), a priest (1688). He wrote

²⁰ Magalhães 1688: 136, pdf: 162.

²¹ Magalhães 1688: 150-151, pdf: 175-176. My translation; my emphasis.

²² Kangxi edition: 37. Transl. in Zhang Wenqin 1999: 148. <http://www.macaudata.com/macabook/book257/html/073601.htm> 153.2.

²³ Shi Jishan *Xianzhitang shiji* vol. 14. Transl. in Zhang Wenjin 1997: 144.

the first sung Mass in Chinese and the first Chinese catholic canticles, published in his *Tianyue zhengyin pu* (Scores of the correct sound of catholic music), 1710.

He studied *qin* with a famous master, Chen, and wrote a *Collection on São Paulo church (San Ba ji)*²⁴. *Ban tong yin* is a poem to be found in another collection called *San Yu ji*. It is sometimes understood as describing playing Western tunes on *qin* (“*chu han xi miao xiang*”), but this interpretation is rather controversial²⁵.

poem N° 5 *Ganyong shenghui zhenli* (Gratitude to the True Faith)

Guang yue juntian zou,
huan teng huizhong ling.
Qichui jinjiao hao,
Yin he feng shi jing.
Nei jing wu qiong zhao,
Zhen hua bu duan sheng.
Ci wen cai yi ri,
Shi shang yi qian ling.

We all appreciate the music from Heaven,
That pleases the spirits of the assembly.
Harmonious sounds echo from the instruments,
The sound, accompanying the preaching of the doctrine²⁶
The infinite illumination inside the Church,
And the flowers continuously exhale fragrance.
It seems like it was only one day in this reality,
But it signifies a thousand years in my life.²⁷

the statement here is about the capacity of musical sound to express religious voice, an echo of Paradise

poem N° 20 *Gratitude to the True Faith*

Qianshan houling yi sheng zhong,
Cheng que daoren jian meng duan.
The [unique] sound of the bells from behind the hill
Awaken the monk from his dreams²⁸

the statement here is about the sound of the bell from far away, and its effect: to wake up

Jin Caixiang (Macau)

Jin Caixiang, *Aomen yifu baimiao shi* (Poems on the Foreign Women Praying in the Temple in Macau)²⁹

A clamour rose and all became quiet
Only the organ melody and flowed
All listened to the priests³⁰ teachings
Even women stopped their early chatterings

the statement here is about the effect of musical sound: silence

1735 ~ Yin Guangren (Macau)

Yin Guangren (1691—1758), beginning of Qianlong period, visiting for inspection in Macau, wrote “Ten views” (*Haojing shijing*)³¹:

Shu zhong lai yuan si,

²⁴ Wu Li 1718.

²⁵ <http://www.silkqin.com/02qnpu/05tydq/ty2a.htm#q29>.

²⁶ “the classic of the Phoenix and the Lion”, named after the Evangelists.

²⁷ *Aozhong zayong* (Random Songs of Macau), no. 5. Transl. in Zhang Wenqin 1999: 148. <http://www.macaudata.com/macabook/book213/html/21401.htm>.

²⁸ *Aozhong zayong* (Random Songs of Macau), no. 20. Transl. in Zhang Wenqin 1999: 141. <http://www.macaudata.com/macabook/book213/html/21401.htm>

²⁹ in *Review of Culture* (Macau), 30, 1997: 153. <http://www.macaudata.com/macabook/book257/html/079502.htm>

³⁰ Yushan, i.e. Wu Li.

³¹ *Aomen shi* (Poems from Macau). In *Review of Culture* (Macau), 30, 1997: 144. <http://www.macaudata.com/macabook/book257/html/075901.htm>

*Lai jing yi sheng xian
 Dai yue qing chen hai,
 He yun leng du shan.
 Wu geng hun xiao ji,
 Wanxiang you wu jian
 Shi xiang fan seng wen.
 Ceng neng shi ci guan.*
 The chiming comes from the temple afar,
 Pleasing to the ear in leisure and in peace
 The majestic moon dips into the blue sea,
 The cold clouds get frozen over the hills.
 On the fifth night-watch, in the twilight,
 Everything looks vague and hazy
 May I ask you, my brother from a foreign faith,
 To tell me what this is all about and why?

**the statement here is about sound of bells: from the far
 the statement here is about the esthetic effect (pleasure)**

1735 Du Halde (Beijing)

Much is to be gained to watch at what French Jesuit Jean-Baptiste Du Halde (1674-1743) reported from the Chinese listening to Western music, and on their way to sing without harmony.

La Musique européenne ne leur déplaît pas, pourvu qu'ils n'entendent chanter qu'une seule voix accompagnée de quelques instruments. Mais ce qu'il y a de merveilleux dans cette Musique, je veux dire, ce contraste de voix différentes, de sons graves, & de sons aigus, de dièses, de fugues, de syncopes, n'est nullement de leur goût, & il leur semble une confusion désagréable.³²

They do not dislike European music, if only they hear only one voice at a time, accompanied by a few instruments. But the wonder of this music, I mean its contrast between different voices, low and acute sounds, accidents, fugues, syncopes, is not at all to their taste, and seems to them a distasteful confusion;

the statement here is about one listening to the other's music

La facilité avec laquelle par le moyen des Notes nous retenons un air dès la première fois qu'on l'a entendu, surprit extrêmement le feu Empereur Cang hi. En l'année 1679, il fit venir en son Palais le Père Grimaldi & le Père Pereyra, pour toucher une Orgue & un Clavessin qu'ils lui avaient présentés autrefois. Il goûta nos airs d'Europe, & parut y prendre plaisir. Ensuite il ordonna à ses Musiciens de jouer un air de la Chine sur un de leurs instruments, & il le joua lui-même avec beaucoup de grâce.

The easiness with which we record a tune which we hear for the first time through the notation surprised extremely the late Kangxi emperor. In the year of 1679, he had Father Grimaldi and Pereyra to come to his Palace to play an organ and a harpsichord that were offered to him previously. He tasted our European tunes and seemed to like it. Then he ordained his musicians to play a Chinese tune on one of their instruments and himself played with much grace.

the statement here is about one listening to the other's music

Le Père Pereyra qui avait un talent singulier pour la Musique, fit placer une grande et magnifique Horloge au haut de l'Eglise des Jésuites. Il avait fait faire quantité de petites cloches, suivant les proportions de l'harmonie, & les avait placées dans une Tour destinée à cet usage. Chaque marteau était attaché à un fil de fer qui le faisait lever & tomber sur la cloche en même temps. Au dedans de la Tour un grand tambour, sur lequel des airs de la Chine étaient notés avec de petites pointes. Immédiatement avant l'heure le Tambour se trouvait dégagé de quelques dents de roue qui le tenaient arrêté & suspendu. Il suivait aussitôt le mouvement d'un grand poids pendu à sa circonférence. Il attrapait avec ses pointes le fil de fer de chaque marteau. Chaque cloche sonnait à son

³² Du Halde 1735 : T. III / 264.

tour, suivant les règles, & l'on entendait distinctement un des plus beaux airs du pays, lequel était suivi de l'air, que la grosse cloche marquait d'un son plus fort.³³

Father Pereyra had a special gift for music, he had a large and munificent clock put at the top of the Jesuit church. He had a lot of small bells made according to the proportions of harmony, and had them placed in a tower devoted to its use. Each hammer was attached with an iron wire which had it struck the bell. Inside the tower was a big rotating cylinder on which Chinese tunes were notated with small points. Just before the hour, the cylinder was freed from small teeth on the wheel which had it stopped before. It followed immediately the movement of a heavy mass hung at its circumference. This or that point attracted the wire of a given hammer. Each bell thus sounded in turn, according to the rules, and one could distinctively hear one of the most beautiful local tune, followed by the tune which the big bell marked with a louder sound.

the statement here is about the construction of an instrument

Ce spectacle fut également nouveau pour la Cour & pour la Ville : les Grands & les petits y accoururent. L'Eglise toute grande qu'elle est, ne pouvait contenir la foule prodigieuse de peuples qui allaient & venaient sans cesse : ils se succédaient continuellement les uns aux autres, & quoique la plupart fussent infidèles, on avait la consolation de les voir se prosterner respectueusement devant une image du Sauveur, & lui adresser humblement leurs prières.

This spectacle was also new for the Court and for the city: big and ordinary people run to see it. The church, as large as it was, could not contain the prodigious crowd of people coming and going: they continuously followed each other, and although most of them were not Christians, one had the consolation to see them respectfully prostrated in front of the Savior's image and humbly addressing Him their prayers.

the statement here is about the effect of organized sound on people

1766 Zhao Yi (Beijing)

In 1671, Kangxi asks Father Ferdinand Verbiest (Nan Huaijen 1623-1688, in China in 1659), Belgian Jesuit, expert in astronomy, mathematics, and music, to teach him music. Verbiest searches help from Portuguese Father Tomé (Thomas) Pereyra (Xu Rishen (1645-1708, arrived in 1673 to Beijing). Pereyra builds a bigger organ and an automatic chime which plays Chinese style melodies.³⁴ A Russian embassy has a report saying they saw the organ built by Pereyra.

Organ and chimes are both described by the historian and scholar of literature Zhao Yi (1727-1814), who from 1749 to 1766 stayed in Beijing.

*Zimingzhong, shi chenbiao, jie laizi Xiyang. Zhong neng jie shi ziming, biaoze you zhen sui gui ke zhi shi er shi, jie jue ji ye.*³⁵

The automatic clock shows the parts of time, it comes all from the West. The bell may be strucked automatically, it has needles to indicate every quarter of the 12 hours, that is really extreme art.

the description here is of the mechanism of the bells

*You lou wei zuoyue zhi suo. Yi qiuran zhe zuo er guqin, ze sheng, xiao, qing, di, zhong, gu, nao, zhuo zhi sheng wu yi bu bei. Qi fa shi mu jia yu lou, jia zhi shang xuan qian guan shu shi, xia chui bu ji lou ban cun xu. Lou ban liang ceng, ban you feng, yu ge guan kong xiang dui. Yi ren zai dong nan yu, gu zui yi zuo qi. Qi zai jia ban zhong jin qu yu qian guan xia zhi feng, you feng zhi da yu guan. Guan ge you yi tong si xi yu qin xuan. Qiu ran zhe bo xuan zhe bo xuan, ze ge si zi chou dun qi guan zhong zhi guan lie er fa xiang yi. Qian guan da xiao bu tong, zhong ge you kuan qiao, yi xiang zhu yue zhi sheng, gu yi ren gu qin er zhong guan qi ming, bai yue wu bu bei, zhen ji qiao ye. You you yue zhong, bing bu fan ren tiao bo, er an shi zi ming, yi bei zhu yue zhi sheng, you wei qiao jue.*³⁶

³³ Du Halde 1735 : T. III / 270.

³⁴ Golvers 1993: 124-126 and 316, n. 19-21. Du Halde 1735, III: 112, 270.

³⁵ Zhao Yi, *Yanpu zaji* vol. 2. 15a "Zhongbiao"; See Fang Hao 1983: 894-895. Tao 1994: 78 <https://archive.org/stream/02095975.cn#page/n72/mode/2up> <http://202.175.127.4/macabook/book257/html/062401.htm>

³⁶ Zhao Yi. *Yanpu zaji* vol. 2. 16a "Xiyang qianli jing ji yueqi" (Western Mirrors and Music Instruments from Ten Thousand Miles). <https://archive.org/stream/02095975.cn#page/n74/mode/2up>

There is a tower for making music. A man with curled beard is sitted to strike the instrument, but incomparable with the sound of Chinese instruments such as mouth organ, stones, flutes, bell, drum, cymbals. It is arranged with method in a wooden support inside the tower, on the support are suspended lead pipes by tens, the lowest hanging part does not reach the tower board from an inch. The tower has two floors, the planks are sewed in couple with a hole in each tube. A man sits a the south-east corner, by striking the mouth he makes air. The air is pressed in the middle of the planks to reach the stich at the base of the lead pipe, and from the stich right to the pipe. Each pipe has a bronze thread tied with the key of the instrument. The man with curled beard strikes the keys, but each thread itself pumps at time the pass in the middle of the pipe to eventually make the sound. Big and small bronze pipes are different, each has in its middle a opening hollow corresponding to the sound of music, that's why one man plays the instrument so that the pipes sound, there is no hundred music it does not provide, it is really wonderful. There are also musical bells, which do not need people to manipulate them, but at time move by themselves, providing a lot of music sounds, this is especially wonderful.

the description here is of the astronomic mirror and of the organ

1769 Bourgeois (Beijing)

Les placards [de rappel de l'interdiction de la religion chrétienne] s'affichaient le saint jour de Noël. Cela ne nous empêcha pas de célébrer cette Fête avec éclat [...] A minuit notre Eglise était plus éclairée qu'en plein jour. La Messe commença au son des instruments & d'une Musique vocale, qui est fort au goût des Chinois, & qui a quelquefois de quoi plaire aux Européens. Il n'y eut que vingt Musiciens; on retrancha le gros tambour & les instruments qui font trop de bruits, & qui dans les circonstances auraient pu insulter les Idolâtres.³⁷

The posters announcing the interdiction of Christian religion were displayed on Christmas day. This did not prevent us from celebrate it with brilliance. [...] At midnight our church was more litghted than with daylight. The Mass started with the sound of instruments and with vocal music which is much in the taste of the Chinese and sometimes has something to please the Europeans. There was only twenty musicians. We sustracted the big drum and the too loud instruments, which in such circonstances could have felt as an insult by the idolaters.

the statement here is about noise and music: not to make too much noise.

1772 Cibot (Beijing)

Many Missionaries were musicians, or at least played music, were scientists, and it is perhaps of some interest to look at the point of view of one who was more like an ordinary priest, interested by faith and salute.

Quand la Croix entre dans l'Eglise, les tambours et les autres instruments se font entendre, et continuent jusqu'à ce que le Très-Saint-Sacrement soit sur l'Autel; ce troisième corps de musiciens se trouve au jubé qui est dans le fond de l'Eglise. Le Saint-Sacrement passe au milieu des Congréganistes, qui sont à genoux un cierge à la main, le reste des Néophites est derrière eux, et remplit l'Eglise : tout ceux qui sont en surplus, et il y en a plus de cinquante, vont se ranger au sanctuaire dans un fort bel ordre. Après les motets, les encensements et les prières, il se fait un petit silence qui finit par une simphonie et une musique universelle, au moment que le prêtre se tourne pour donner la Bénédiction. Si on pouvait avoir l'âme assez dure pour voir sans verser des larmes, une pareille cérémonie dans la ville du monde la plus idolâtre, et où le glaive de la persécution est sans cesse levé sur nos têtes, on ne résisterait pas dans ce dernier moment, surtout si l'on était à portée d'entendre les soupirs et les sanglots que la musique étouffe par son bruit.³⁸

When the cross enters the church, drums and other instruments are heard until the Holy-Sacrament is on the Altar. The third corps of musicians stays at the back of the church.

³⁷ Letter from Father François Bourgeois, Beijing, 15 October 1769. *Lettres édifiantes et curieuses* XXIX, 1773: 229-231.

³⁸ Pierre Martial Cibot (Limoges 1727-Beijing 1780, in China in 1760), ms. letter, Beijing, in *Lettres édifiantes et curieuses* 24, 1781: 247-258, loc. 257. [Id. XXVIII. 1783: 94-114, loc. 110-112]. See also Bornet 1945.

The Holy-Sacrament passes among the members of the association, kneeling with a candle in hand, the neophytes are behind them, fulling the church: all those who are with a surplice, more than fifty in number, go lining in the sanctuary in a beautiful order. After the motets, incense offering, and prayers, there is a short silence which finishes with a *symphony* and a universal music, when the priest turns to give his benediction. If one could have a soul hard enough to support to see without pouring tears such a ceremony in the most idolatric city in the world, where the sword of persecution is constantly above our heads, he would not resist in this last moment, especially if he would hear sobs and sighs that music dampers through its noise.

the statement here is about sound and music: not to make too much noise

1779 Amiot (Beijing)

Le Révérend Père Amiot, Missionnaire à Pékin, auteur du Mémoire qui contient ce manuscrit, nous apprend³⁹, dans un discours préliminaire, qu'ayant fait entendre, à plusieurs Chinois, les Sauvages, les Cyclopes (a Pièces de clavecin de Rameau [note de La Borde]), & d'autres morceaux, qui plaisent généralement à notre nation, ils n'y prirent aucun plaisir, & que l'un d'eux lui dit : Les airs de notre Musique passent de l'oreille jusqu'au cœur, & du cœur jusqu'à l'âme. Nous les sentons, nous les comprenons. Ceux que vous venez de jouer, ne font pas sur nous cet effet.⁴⁰

Father Amiot, missionary in Beijing, author of the present manuscript, tells us, in a introduction, that he had some Chinese listen to harpsichord pieces by Rameau such as *les Sauvages, les Cyclopes*, and other pieces which ordinary people from our nation like. The Chinese showed no pleasure at all, and someone said: *The tunes of our music go from the ear to the heart, and from the heart to the soul. We feel it, we understand it. Those you just played for us don't make this effect on us.*

Or in Amiot's own words:

Nos airs n'étant point faits pour leurs oreilles ni leurs oreilles pour nos airs, il n'était pas surprenant qu'ils n'en sentissent pas les beautés comme ils sentaient celles des leurs. Les airs de notre musique passent de l'oreille jusqu'au cœur du cœur jusqu'à l'âme. Nous les sentons, nous les comprenons : ceux que vous venez de jouer ne font pas sur nous cet effet.⁴¹

the statement here is about a question of taste

Analysis

Starting from Mersenne, Kircher, going to Amiot, Pereyra, Pedrini, I felt European people from the 17th and 18th century were essentially attracted by the construction of instruments, the musical system.

Starting from Chinese poems dedicated to the hearing of Macau São Paulo's chimes, echoing so many Chinese poems and the whole esthetic of the *qin* way, I constructed the impression that the Chinese people from the 17th and 18th century were essentially attracted by the effect of the sound as heard from far away.

In focusing on the systematic study of letters, poems, descriptions of a trip, both by Europeans and Chinese, and dedicated to each other's music and sound producing and especially to the sound producing bells, I now can propose a much more delicate image of the various listening strategies.

I can now summarize the statements in a list, and propose a classification in four categories; to make it clearer, Easterners appreciations are described *in italics*:

A description, having to do with the building or construction of an instrument (10: 5 from Easterners, 5 from Westerners)

B meaning, be it literal or the expression (5: all from Easterners)

³⁹ See Amiot 1779: 2.

⁴⁰ La Borde 1780: 125.

⁴¹ Amiot 1779: 2.

C effect, whether esthetic (pleasure) or social (7: 3 from Easterners, 4 from Westerners)

D appreciation on pleasure given or on quality (8: 2 from Easterners, 6 from Westerners).

802 Tang Huiyao

A description *the description of the instruments*

D appreciation *the quality (I like it or not)*

1600 Ricci

D appreciation pleasure (I like it, and it is new)

A description instruments, and the musical system

1601 Liang Di (Macau)

B meaning *of sound and the meaning*

1610 Feng Shike (Beijing)

A description *of a musical instrument, and of its sound*

1623 Aleni (Toledo)

A description of musical instruments, not of their sound

1640 Furtado (Beijing)

B meaning of an inscription on a musical instrument⁴²

1640 Schall von Bell (Beijing)

A description the building of a musical instrument, the method to play it, and the repertoire

1654 Tan Qian (Beijing)

A description *of a musical instrument*

1665 You Tong (Beijing)

B meaning *of sound and meaning*

1668 Magalhães (Beijing)

D appreciation the quality (I like it or not)

A description of a sonorous instrument, compared to a musical instrument

D appreciation of the quality (I like it or not)

1684 ~ Wu Xingzuo (Macau)

B meaning *of sound*

1700~ Jishan (Macau)

C effect *the quality of sound (coming from far away)*

⁴² Although the narration is made by a Westerner, he tells about a question of meaning asked by an Easterner.

1718 Wu Li (Macau)

B meaning *the capacity of musical sound to express religious voice, an echo of Paradise*

C effect *the sound of the bell from far away, and its effect: to wake up*

Jin Caixiang (Macau)

C effect *of musical sound: silence*

1735 ~ Yin Guangren (Macau)

C effect *sound of bells: from the far*

D appreciation of the esthetic effect (pleasure)

1735 Du Halde (Beijing)

D appreciation one listening to the other's music

D appreciation one listening to the other's music

A description the construction of an instrument

C effect of organized sound on people

1766 Zhao Yi (Beijing)

A description *of the mechanism of the bells*

A description *of the astronomic mirror and of the organ*

1769 Bourgeois (Beijing)

C effect noise and music: not to make too much noise

1772 Cibot (Beijing)

C effect sound and music: not to make too much noise

1779 Amiot (Beijing)

D appreciation a question of taste⁴³

If I now classify the categories of statements according to Easterners and Westerners, I come to a more clarified image (fig. 2-4).

The judgement on technical side [A description] appears to be very well balanced between Easterners and Westerners.

The question of meaning, so important it could seem today to many Western musicologists, was raised only by the Chinese.

It has been necessary to separate the judgements of the effects on pleasure as "D appreciation, or question of taste", dominant among the Westerners, from the discourse C on the effect.

⁴³ The statement is reported as having been told by Chinese, which is very unlikely, since this theory is very much European. See later.

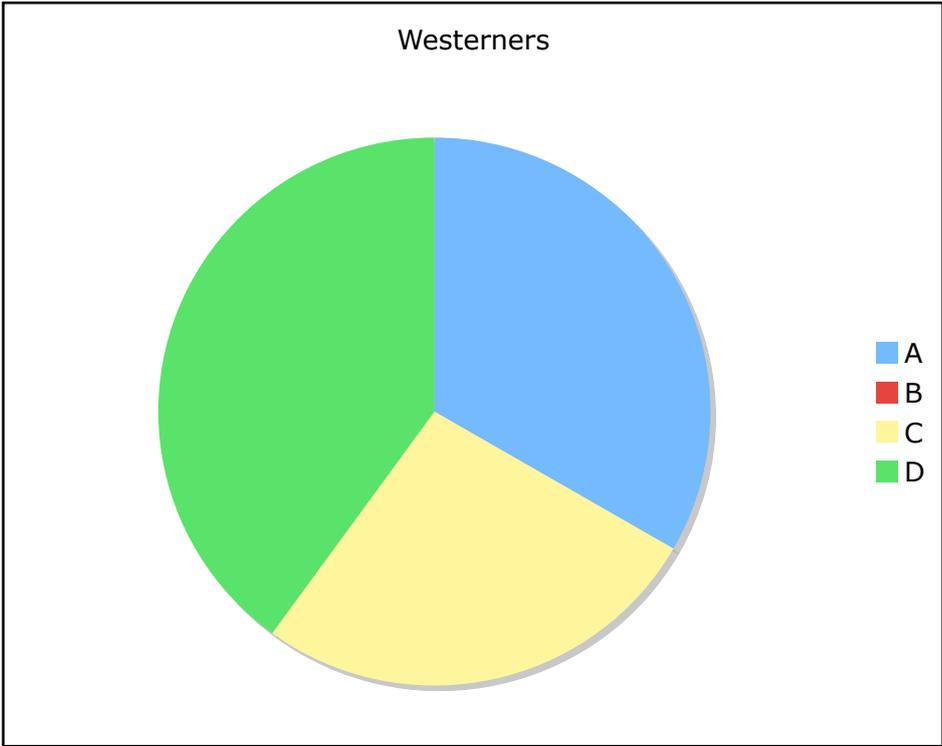


Figure 3 Westerners

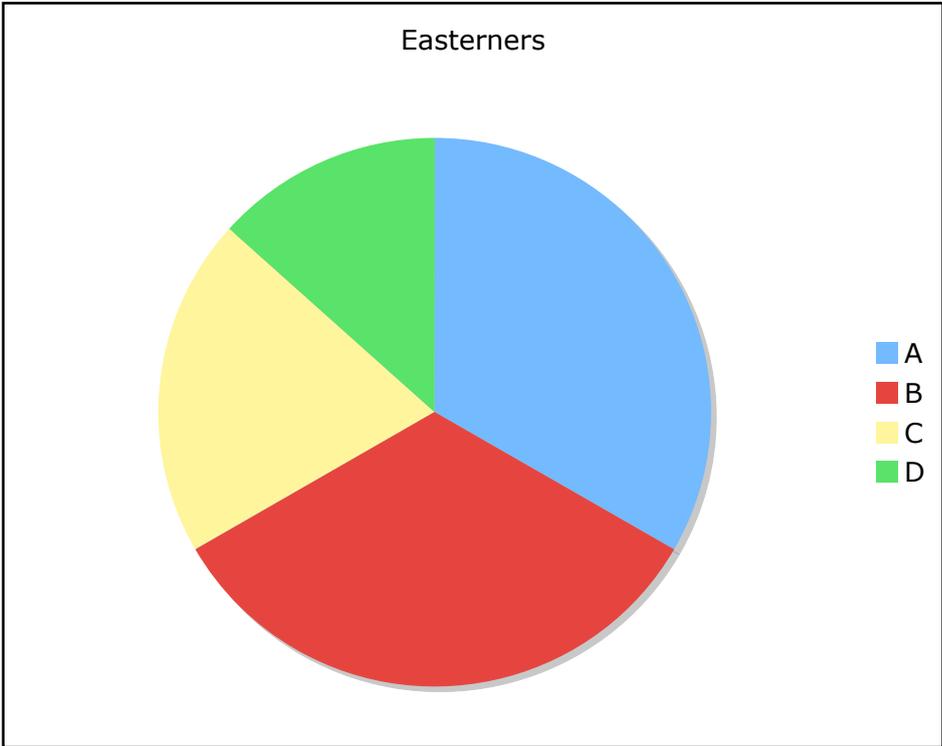


Figure 4 Easterners

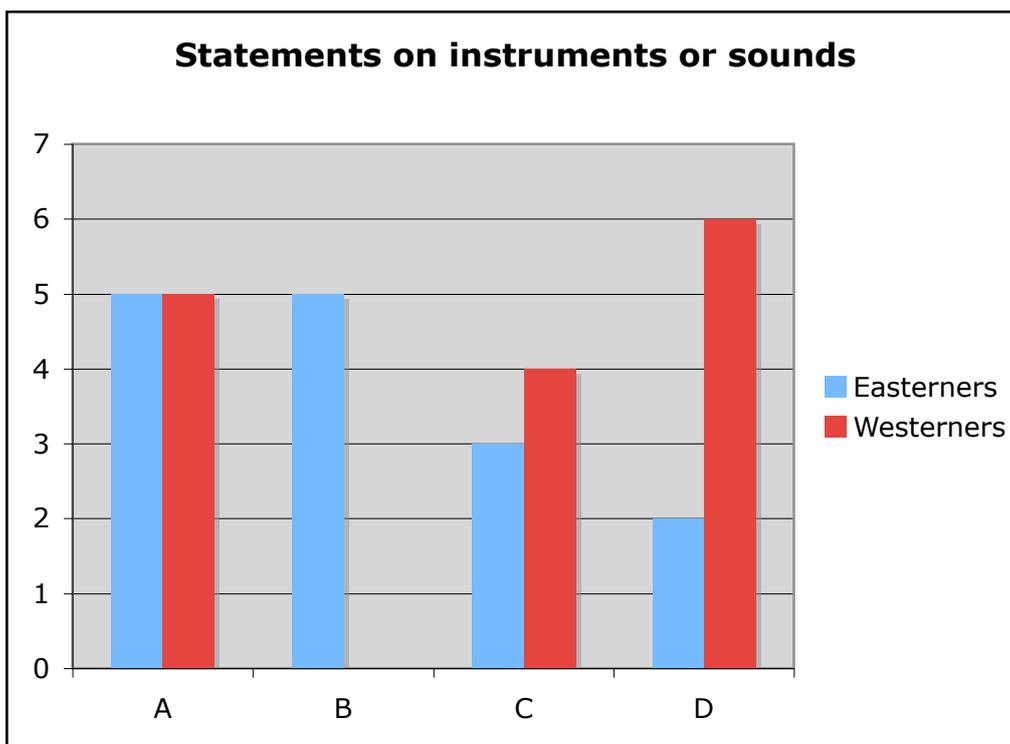


Figure 5 Statements compared

As mentioned above, François Delalande (1998, 2013) proposed a classification (Marty 2012) of the strategy of listening into three categories:

empathic, figurative and taxonomic.

The classification by Delalande can be validated here, with the correspondance:

A description *taxonomic*

B meaning *figurative*

C effect

D appreciation *empathic*

But the effect, as characterized by Wu Li

The unique sound of the bell from behind the hill

Awakes the monk from his dreams

is neither *empathic* or *figurative*: for a Chinese, the effect of sound on nature is real, and it includes human beings, as part of nature. As could still be observed at the end of 20th century in mainland China (and probably Taiwan, Japan, Korea), personal judgement has been very much controlled by social interaction, and this is clearly apparent in our survey.

Conclusion: Hearing, listening

A Brazilian proverb quoted by Jean-Christophe Frisch on our flight back from Macau and after the narration by a former Portuguese missionary in China tells:

*Só o silêncio é sincero. É preciso escutar o silêncio, não como um surdo, mas como um cego!*⁴⁴

One should listen to silence not like a deaf person, but like a blind person.

Teaching how to describe through the sense of hearing, a French manual of writing quotes various texts :

descriptions of landscape by blind people

descriptions of a harbour from a window by Victor Hugo

⁴⁴ Sabino 1956.

description of snow falling by Colette

As I have learned from Pierre Schaeffer (1966) to listen to sound as it is, and not to reach the way it was produced, I do easily notice that in each case of the French literature, the latter was precisely the case: the listener interprets sounds as the effect produced by a cause. If we now compare to what is the most Chinese, bells coming from far, the sound is not the effect of the cause, but the cause of the effect. Certainly it is the same elements, but the logic is upside down. If I authorize myself in going more in depth in interpretation, I shall say that we can induce the fascination experienced by the Chinese towards automatic clocks or music as correlative to the interest for an effect without cause, here without human cause.

But the major conclusion for the anthropologist and cultural historian who examines the confrontation of people from two supposed different cultures is the belief — not only Western — that there is someone as “the Other”, and that this “Other” has a radically different way of feeling and expressing, including in her relation towards sound, and music. One of the variants of that opinion is that only Mozart is universal. The experience and the careful reading of opinions emitted by European and Chinese people on each other’s sound and music show that such an essentialism does not fit with the variations. In this way, the statement “*Les airs de notre Musique passent de l'oreille jusqu'au cœur, & du cœur jusqu'à l'âme. Nous les sentons, nous les comprenons. Ceux que vous venez de jouer, ne font pas sur nous cet effet*” reported after Amiot as having been told by Chinese is very unlikely, since this theory is very much European.

It is among the effects of such an essentialisation, wether true or not — and it is not — that poets and deep listeners in the West have developed an autochtoneous discourse, inspired by an imaginary concept attributed to the Chinese: *sharawadji*.

sharawadji

...the Chinese, people whose way of thinking seems to lie as wide of ours in Europe as their country does. But their greatest reach of imagination, is employed in contriving figures, where the beauty shall be great, and strike the eye, but without any order or disposition of parts, that shall be commonly or easily observed. And though we have hardly any notion of this sort of beauty, yet they have a particular word to express it ; and where they find it hit their eye at first sight, they say the Sharawadgi is fine or is admirable, or any such expression of esteem. And whoever observes the work upon the best Indian gowns, or the painting upon their best screens or purcellans, will find their beauty is all of this kind, (that is) without order. (Temple 1683/1908: 54)⁴⁵

The rationalization made on wikipedia finding a “real” source to this fantasy does not make sense.

sharawadji Derived from the Chinese phrase “sa luo wei qi,” literally meaning careless grace employed for an impressive and surprising effect⁴⁶

However, French, Canadians, and German people (Marin 1976. Augoyard 1995: 126. Schryer 1998. Bick 2008. Vigneron 2008.) in the articulated fields of philosophy, acoustic, electroacoustic, sound garden research and imagining have appropriate that notion of *sharawadji*, and the idea that this notion comes from China. The expression of my feeling that it does not [come from China] would only deserve one answer: »und dann?«, « et alors? », “So what?”.

⁴⁵ See also Walpole 1785: 45/46.

⁴⁶ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sharawadji> no reference given. In Japanese “careless grace” *kazaranaï*.

In fact, it was not very difficult for a trained Asianist to guess that such a word as “Sharawadji” would stand for an Indian “Saravaji”, misspelling of Sarasvati:

* Shuga MruniiffigtAfiet, in the Samfred, the female papagay, tfev symbol of Sara/vaji, the goddess of eloquence.⁴⁷

Shuga tarunni signifies, in the Samscred [sanskrit], the female papaguay, the symbol of *Sarasvadi* [Sarasvatī], the goddess of eloquence.⁴⁸

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⁴⁷ transcribed by OCR from San Bartolomeo 1800: 367.

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