

🦋 Notes About The Program 🦋

“Chinese Baroque” explores the dynamic and complex cultural exchanges between Western Europe and China in the 17th and 18th centuries through the lens of music. Despite mutual fascination, it was often difficult to surmount linguistic and cultural differences to reach a true understanding of each other.

🦋 Selections from *Messe des Jésuites à Pékin*

Charles d’Ambleville (d. 1637)

Written by the French composer Charles d’Ambleville for use by the Jesuits in the Chinese court, this Mass harkens back to an archaic style, old-fashioned even in its day. It is emblematic of the Jesuits’ desire to maintain their “European-ness” in a foreign land.

🦋 *A Chinese Air* (pub. in *Gentleman’s Magazine*, 1756)

Loum Kiqua transcribed by “A.B.”

Though transcribed “note for note” and harmonized from an extemporaneous performance by Loum Kiqua, a Chinese merchant then in London, this air has none of the features that we associate with Chinese music. It demonstrates the wide divide separating Western and Chinese culture – it seems that the transcriber could not figure out the pentatonic scale!

🦋 *Les Sauvages*

Jean-Philipp Rameau (1683-1764)

The French missionary Jean-Joseph Marie Amiot tried (and failed) to impress the court mandarins with this harpsichord solo by Rameau. Says Amiot: “They replied as politely as they possibly could that our songs are not made for their ears, nor their ears for our songs...it was not surprising that they did not sense the beauties of them, as they sensed them in their own.”

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🌿 *Jasmine Flower* 茉莉花 and *Wild Geese Descend on a Sand Bank* 平沙落雁

These are two of the most well-known classical Chinese tunes. First recorded in the 18th century, “Jasmine Flower” became best known to Western audiences through Giacomo Puccini’s *Turandot* (where it is used as a leitmotif). Published at the end of the Ming Dynasty, “Wild Geese” refers to the traditional Chinese association of wild geese and sandbanks with separation and exile, which became especially poignant for Chinese under foreign, i.e. Qing, rule.

🌿 **Chinese folk song “transcriptions:” *Moo-lee-chwa* and *Higho highau***
Karl Kambra (pub. 1796, London)

The Macartney Mission of 1793 inspired a fresh wave of interest in Chinese culture. This English publication includes two renderings of the Chinese folk song “Moo-lee-chwa,” or “Jasmine Flower,” one in its (supposed) original form, the other rendered “more agreeable to the English ear,” harmonized and supplied with English lyrics. As with the earlier air, it seems that the melody has gone awry.

🌿 ***Sonata for violin and basso continuo*** **Teodorico Pedrini 德理格 (1671-1746)**

Teodorico Pedrini’s twelve sonatas were the only Western-style Baroque work known to have been written in China. For 36 years, Pedrini served as a Vincentian missionary to the imperial Chinese court and was the music tutor for three sons of the Kangxi Emperor. He was also the co-author of the first Chinese treatise of Western music theory. While Pedrini’s sonatas are modeled after those of his compatriot Arcangelo Corelli, they are distinctive pieces in their own right.

🌿 ***Incantation of the Monk Pu’an*** (普庵咒)

The *Incantation of the Monk Pu’an* is one of the most popular *qin* melodies today. As a *qin* melody title it is first mentioned in 1609 as an alternative name for the Buddhist chant *Shitan Zhang* (Siddham Stanzas). It was reported that the Emperor Kangxi played this on harpsichord for the Jesuit missionaries.

🌿 **Traditional *guqin* tunes set to poetry by Matteo Ricci**
Matteo Ricci 利瑪竇, courtesy name 西泰 (1552-1610)/arr. John Thompson

My promises are above 吾願在上

A shepherd boy wandering in the hills 牧童遊山

One of the leading founders of the Jesuit China missions, Ricci’s missionary endeavors took him from Macau to Beijing, paving the way for two centuries of fruitful dialogue between Western missionaries and the Chinese court. During his time in the Ming court, Ricci wrote eight poems in classical Chinese and set them to tunes (now lost). This recreation sets his poetry to *qin* tunes that Ricci might have heard in the early 17th century.

🌿 ***Deuxième Divertissement Chinois* from *Memoire sur la musique des Chinois***
Jean-Joseph Marie Amiot (1718-1793; pub. Paris, 1776-1791); arr. Picard/Liu

A French Jesuit missionary to the Chinese court, Amiot’s writings form the most complete written record by a Westerner of late 18th century China. He collected traditional tunes and transcribed them into Western notation; this arrangement presents the tunes in combinations of Western and Eastern instruments.