Is it not about time for Europe to discover and explore one of the world’s biggest and most fascinating music cultures? That of China, a country with one billion people, one fifth of the world’s population. China has not just one type of music, or one kind of musical system, as many people think. In fact, it is the home of hundreds of different styles and genres of music, belonging to a great many different cultures. Even today, a considerable part of China’s musical heritage remains a well-kept secret from Westerners.

CHIME, the European Foundation for Chinese Music Research, has now started a regular publication which pays ample attention to the subject of Chinese Music. It will be called CHIME, like the Foundation, (the abbreviation stands for “Chinese Music Europe”). By way of introduction, we have sent our first issue free of charge to 500 readers in Europe and elsewhere.

If we succeed in our purpose, CHIME will be more than just a newsletter on Chinese music. It will contain readable contributions on a wide variety of subjects, with major emphasis on the practical aspects of music research in China and related parts of Asia. The reader will find reports on fieldwork, introductory papers on major genres of Chinese music, useful reading lists on special topics, interviews with scholars and musicians, letters, polemics and, of course, news about concerts and meetings. In this way, we hope to please scholars and general lovers of Chinese and/or Asian music alike.

It should be noted that one of our most important aims is to publish the practical experiences of those who have followed music courses, or carried out research in China (or in bordering countries, under comparable circumstances). CHIME is not meant as a specialized scientific journal. It is not primarily concerned with e.g. detailed problems of Chinese music theory. There are already many journals in the world which include scholarly papers on that topic.

The European Foundation for Chinese Music Research started early this year, as the initiative of a group of young European researchers. We hope everyone with an interest in little explored areas of Asian musical culture will support the Foundation through a subscription to our newsletter. In the future, our initiative may perhaps give an extra stimulus to Western musicology: China is not a different world, but it is most certainly an amazing one, with many new possibilities for research.

Starting from now, CHIME will appear twice yearly. Subscriptions run from autumn to summer. Those who subscribe to the newsletter will receive both issue No.2 (Winter 1990) and No.3 (Spring 1991). From 1991 onwards, CHIME will also organize an annual meeting for its subscribers, which will take place in conjunction with the annual meeting of the European Seminar in Ethnomusicology. We hope we can meet you there, too!
WHAT'S IN A CHINESE NAME?

The “dancing” character on the cover of this newsletter was painted by the 25-year old Suzhou painter Zhang Qinghui. He is currently studying oil painting in Holland. At our request, he took up the calligrapher's brush to write the Chinese word qing (“chime”) in such a way as to bring out its musical implications. Pleading artistic freedom, Qinghui produced a character which even a seasoned sinologist would not easily decipher as qing but which is, indeed, very lively and elegant. A more recognizable version of the same character, also painted by Zhang Qinghui, is shown above. The various meanings of “chime” need little explanation: the word may refer to bell ringing, clear and resonant sounds, clarity, harmony, a spirit of agreement, or, in its specific sense of a Chinese musical instrument, to the L-shaped sonorous stones which were used in the Confucian court music of ancient China. (The character qing actually contains, in its lower part, a pictograph of a stone).

The European Foundation for Chinese Music Research has adopted CHIME (the abbreviation standing for “Chinese Music Europe”) as its official name.