



USC-CCS China Studies Webinar Series

Molihua [茉莉花] as Cultural Text: what can music bring to Chinese Studies



ABOUT THE SPEAKER

Frederick Lau is an ethnomusicologist, flutist, and conductor whose scholarly interests include a broad range of topics in Chinese, Western, and Asian music and cultures. He is author of *Music in China* and co-editor of *Making Waves: Traveling Musics in Asia and the Pacific*, *Vocal Music and Cultural Identity in Contemporary Music: Unlimited Voices in East Asia and the West*, *Locating East Asia in Western Art Music*. Lau is editor of the book series entitled *Music and Performing Arts of Asia and the Pacific*, University of Hawaii Press. Currently, he is chair of the Department of Music, professor of Ethnomusicology, and director of the Center for Chinese Music Studies at the Chinese University of Hong Kong. Prior to joining CUHK, he was professor of ethnomusicology and director of the Center for Chinese Studies at the University of Hawaii at Manoa.

ABSTRACT

Molihua is a Chinese folksong known throughout China and in the world. Why does a humble regional folksong attain such global notoriety? In this talk, I discuss several important moments of this folksong's existence. I describe the different ways that *Molihu* has been received, recontextualized, resignified, and capitalized inside and outside China. Its journey took the song from China to England, Japan, Europe, and eventually turned it into the best-known Chinese folksong abroad. It has also been transformed into a musical and cultural icon for many China musicians and composers at home nowadays. Using *Molihua* as a text and case study, I suggest that music and sonic articulation are important tools for understanding the sentiment and the everchanging modes of circulation of Chinese music. The shifting meaning of *Molihua* reveals how China has been perceived, performed, and construed by both insiders and outsiders.

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Online via Zoom

Conducted in English

All welcome
Free admission
Registration required
(by 18 Nov 3 pm)

