**About the work**

“Yao shi ni xiang feifei, chao si mu xiang chaoyne ni neng li suo ji zhi shi, ni jiing yongyuan de bu dao ni suo yao xinmi de dangxi. Wei shenme bu shi ziji xinjing shenning Zai ji de xiao shan pang xun zhai pingjing.”
(Ricci)

“If you yearn for things outside yourself
You will never obtain what you are seeking
Why not put your own heart in order
And find peace on your own hillside.”

The great Jesuit missionary Matteo Ricci spent 27 years in China and died in Beijing in 1610. In addition to theological writings, he also produced works in the fields of horology, hydraulics, optics, observational astronomy, surveying, music, geography and geometry, among other things.

After Ricci died, his fellow Jesuits published his journal. *Quando il Fiume Giallo si acchiararà (Frammenti ricciani)*, scored for alto voice, violin and cello includes texts from Ricci’s journal/diary in (a) the original Italian (Italian-Ricci), (b) the translated Latin edition by Nicolas Trigault (Latin-Ricci/Trigault), (c) Trigault’s own Latin and Portuguese commentary contribution in this journal translation (Latin-Trigault), and (d) from Ricci’s Chinese writings. The texts are anchored by a musical ritornello that sets a central prayer from St. Ignatius’ “Contemplation to obtain Love” from his *Spiritual Exercises*.

The work’s title phrase *Quando il Fiume Giallo si acchiararà* (When the Yellow River clears) is a quote of a quote (Ricci quoting a Chinese proverb). It gives the idea, that was very much Ricci’s, that the conversion of China, and any conversion, is a rare, difficult, miraculous event--and still one that one has to pursue and to work for, in order to be ready when the opportunity eventually will arise.

-Ralf Yusuf Gawlick