

Cambridge choir performs Chinese songs

Social media accounts on mainland platforms to promote music album

LONDON — The choir of King's College, Cambridge, released its new album in late January containing songs performed in Chinese for the first time. The album contains 19 songs, with two of them sung in Mandarin.

One of the songs is *Second Farewell to Cambridge*, a poem originally written by Chinese poet and King's College alumnus Xu Zhimo, a famous early

20th-century Chinese poet. The other song is *Jasmine Flower*, a Chinese folk song.

This is the first time in its more than 500-year history that the King's College choir has released and recorded songs in Chinese.

The track listing of this album has been carefully selected to best represent the nearly 100-year-old bond that King's College shares with China.

Both the name of the album and its lead song, *Second Farewell to Cambridge*, celebrates the legacy of Xu's poetry.

The young poet studied at King's College in 1921 and 1922, and wrote this poem in 1928 when he revisited King's. It paints an idyllic portrait of the college, and is now a compulsory text on Chinese literature syllabuses, learned by millions at schools across the country every year. It has also attracted numerous Chinese tourists to visit Cambridge.

While *Second Farewell to Cambridge* has already been

adapted into several pop songs, this release marks its first mainstream classical interpretation, and features a new arrangement by acclaimed English composer John Rutter.

And for the second piece, the choir displays their impressively accurate grasp of Chinese pronunciation in Stephen Cleobury's new arrangement of the 18th century folk song *Jasmine Flower*.

And the cover image of the album, a Chinese jasmine flower, was painted by Yu Hui, a well-known artist from

Jiangsu province in East China, who specializes in painting flowers and birds.

The choir of King's College is planning to host events later this year to mark the album, including an event during the annual Xu Zhimo Poetry and Art Festival to be held there this summer.

During the festival, King's College will also host a small ceremony to mark the opening of the Xu Zhimo Friendship Garden at the college, which will be the first Chinese garden built at the University of Cambridge.

In addition, the choir will also launch social media accounts on Chinese platforms in conjunction with the album's release to better reach Chinese audiences.

The King's College choir, which comprises 16 male students from King's and 16 choristers from the nearby King's College School, is one of the most accomplished and renowned in the world. Every year on Christmas Eve, the Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols is broadcast from the chapel to millions of listeners worldwide.

This new album also includes popular classics by Mozart, Faure and Durufle. The album ends with the ever-popular King's Men singing a more contemporary collection of a cappella music. A selection of famous festive pieces are also featured, which the choir performed to the delight of audiences during their most recent tour of China.

King's College was founded in 1441 by Henry VI, and is one of the oldest colleges in Cambridge.

XINHUA

Primary school kids get crafty to mark the Year of the Dog

As the Year of the Dog approaches, Tongji Experimental School in Qingdao, Shandong province, is holding handicraft sessions to celebrate the upcoming Spring Festival. Primary school students are creating artworks such as paper-cuts, clay sculptures and calligraphy, on the theme of "golden dogs".

PHOTOS BY LIANG XIAOPENG / XINHUA



Tech boom drawing more graduates back

Chinese graduates from foreign universities are returning home in bigger numbers than ever before, as the strength of the Chinese economy and the technology industry in particular being cited among a number of significant factors, Forbes has reported.

China is attracting back more "sea turtles", Chinese students returning home after completing their education abroad, with the fast growth of the technology industry proving the biggest draw in recent years, the report said.

Large tech companies such as Tencent and Alibaba are expanding "exponentially", while venture capital investments in smaller tech startups are growing at a fast speed, the report noted.

Citing government figures from 2011 to 2016, the report pointed out a significant increase in the percentage of students studying abroad,

while noting an even larger increase in the percentage of those returning to China.

According to data from the Ministry of Education, 544,500 people from China went overseas to study in 2016, while 432,500 graduates returned home the same year, an increase of 5.72 percent from 2015.

The Forbes report also highlighted favorable pay packages and benefits for returnees, the career ceiling for Chinese graduates who work abroad and the sense of home as other main factors that continue to draw graduates back in greater numbers.

Another study shows that in 2017, Chinese students with foreign degrees were being paid 17.2 percent more than those graduating from domestic universities, according to a previous report in the South China Morning Post.

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