

## ————DOSSIER————

# Disappointed and Puzzled by Morricone's Official Website

## Criticism and expectations from Chinese fans

by Wenguang Han<sup>37</sup>

(with thanks to Michael Caletka)

### 1979-1994

My name is Wenguang Han, and I'm an Ennio Morricone fan from China. I was born in 1937 and worked for the company Sinopec, before I retired. I love philately and music. Although I am only 9 years younger than Ennio Morricone, I came to know Morricone's name rather late in life. In 1979 I was assigned by Sinopec to go to Le Creusot, a plant in France for supervising an important turbine equipment. A French engineer named Martin lent me a tape with the music of **Once Upon a Time in the West** on it (it was a copied tape though, so no titles or further information was given). When I first heard the music, it felt very novel and surprising and I was very impressed. I asked Martin "*What is this music?*" He said he didn't know, but he also loved it very much. To be able to listen to the music, I had to spend my precious 80 francs (that was half of my three-month allowance abroad. At that time, the Chinese wages were very low and the ordinary people had no foreign currency) to buy a GE cassette recorder and some tapes. On the Chinese market at that time such a commodity had not yet appeared.



After returning home, the music still attracted me like a magnet. I tried to find out more about it, but China was in the closed state then, and I was not able to find someone who could answer all my questions. Until by chance in 1994, 15 years later, I bought a very attractive CD in

<sup>37</sup> All the contents of this article are based on reliable facts. It is impossible to list them all here due to limited space. If necessary, the author can provide them at any time.

Beijing. Its price was 85 RMB, which was equivalent to about half of my monthly income at that time. It had both English and Chinese titles given. The English title is “FILM, MUSIC & LOVE TO ENNIO MORRICONE”, performed by the London Philharmonic Orchestra. Okay, but what did this “ENNIO MORRICONE” mean? Just when I came home and listened to it, I found there the music I have been searching for so many years. And its composer was this ENNIO MORRICONE! This disc (ISRC number is CN-C07-94-323-12/A.J6) may be the first Morricone-album released in mainland China. It was 20-30 years later than in the West!

### **Website and friends**

I retired in 1997, created my first philately website in 2002, where I introduced the music I love. Through this music, I started to get to some friends who love Morricone's music as well. They strongly urged me to set up a music website about Morricone. One of them, Ms. Ding, came to my home in Nanjing from Beijing, a distance of 1000 km, just to provide me with more than 100 albums of Morricone's soundtracks, which she had collected over many years. (The network transmission speed in those days was very slow, only 2-3K/S) It became the first batch of resource for the construction of my site. Many soundtracks I generously obtained through the American fan Don Trunick, who was known as "The Godfather" of the Morricone fans. (See "Maestro" issue #7 p.16). By time Don became a good friend of mine. With the help and encouragement of my friends on August 8th 2003 my Morricone-website finally went online in English and Chinese. It became a major event for Chinese Morricone fans, and I started to deliver important information to the fans worldwide. Many fans asked for help in finding resources. After only eight months 1373 people had signed on. Since the establishment of the website I gradually got to know many new friends around the world, especially many fans from the West. Like Don from America, Didier from Belgium, Michael from Austria, Rainer from Germany, Nicolas and Patrick from France, Alex, Nikita and Ilia from Russia, Jing from The Philippines, Takeshi from Japan and many more. Most of them were senior fans, giving me a lot of help with their knowledge and sharing of information and resources. It was a great support and effort in finally closing the gap that existed for decades about professional knowledge of Morricone and his work between Chinese and Western fans. I also learned about the sublime status of Ennio Morricone as a world-renowned musician, which made me to feel honored and responsible as a webmaster of a website on Morricone.

### **Chronology and questions**

With the gradual enhancement of my site, I first had to figure out which scores were really by Morricone, and which were not. For fans in the Western world, this may not have been such a big problem, because most fans have followed Morricone for many decades, but for Chinese fans, it was not so easy. Since 2005 I began to pay attention to find other websites that offered a chronology of Morricone's work. And I found many: I listed 26 sites on my website<sup>38</sup>, but their contents differed very much, and it was difficult to distinguish which information was right and which one was wrong.

After a while, I mainly studied two Italian sites. One of them calls itself as the "Ennio Morricone official website"

<http://www.enniomorricone.com>. Its Italian title was “Ennio Morricone sito ufficiale autorizzato”. I thought it should be the most authoritative information, so I began to build up my own chronology according to its data. After more than a year of time, I completed all my webpage updates. I was happy that my site had now correct data.

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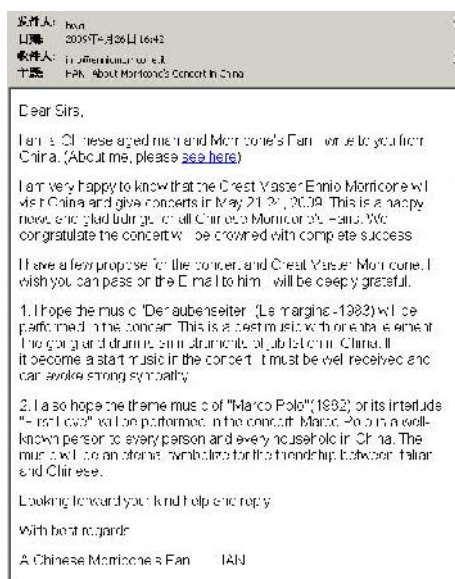
<sup>38</sup> <http://morricone.cn/works/works-000.htm>



But eventually I found some problems. When I edited some movie titles, where the credits clearly showed the composer was Morricone, but I could not find them in the official chronology. Example: **The Red Tent** (1968), **Machine Gun McCain** (1968), **Beyond Justice** (1991), **Fateless** (2004). I compared the information with those on other websites, like the IMDB, that clearly credit Morricone as composer for these movies. When I found a contact email on the official site, I wrote them, asking for their interpretation. But I never got a reply. That was the first time I had some doubt about this site.

### The official site reorganization

In 2009 there were some changes made on the official site. The two Italian sites mentioned above had merged into a single website, and were available in Italian and English. The site was called "Morricone's official website". The two sites were still run independently, but their chronology had been extensively revised. It had been increased by more than 30 films, 401 movies from 1961-2008 in total. Many errors had been corrected, and I felt gratified. Although there were still some unresolved problems, I decided to rewrite my chronology, trusting the new corrected data. It was a lot of work. After six years of construction, my site had grown to more than 2.000 single web pages. Modifications in the chronology involved almost all pages, and they had to be modified manually. But despite all this, and in order to maintain consistency with the official site, but also because I felt responsible for my readers, I finally decided to do it. The process took more than two years until in 2011 my site used all data of the new chronology catalogue and was basically consistent with the official site.



### Invalid contact

It was announced, that in May 2009 Morricone would hold his first China concert in Beijing. As a fan, I would have liked to give some personal advice to the maestro, hoping his first China concert would be more successful. (Perhaps this was superfluous of me, but I thought I should give it a try.)

I had no contact information about Ennio Morricone (in 2007 I had written a letter in Italian to him using Morricone's mail address in Rome, provided by Philippines friend Jing, but I

received no reply<sup>39</sup>), so first I hoped his official website could help me. I found an e-mail address [info@enniomorricone.it](mailto:info@enniomorricone.it). The above-right screenshot is the content of the email.

To ensure this e-mail would be received, I also sent an email with similar content to the Italian embassy in China and its cultural office, and also to the concert ticketing agency in both English and Chinese. Only the ticket agency replied, telling me that they had forwarded my email to the relevant department. But in the end, it was all the reaction I got - nobody ever responded to my mail. It made me very sad. After the concert, I got a booklet. On it there was given a "show contact" email address [musastudio@libero.it](mailto:musastudio@libero.it). So I tried this address by sending a similar email to get in touch, but it was fruitless as well.

Since I dedicated myself to the hobby of philately at end of the last century, I wrote to leaders of over 100 countries worldwide, requesting their signature. Finally I received 32 national replies and signatures, including German Chancellor Helmut Kohl, French President Jacques Chirac, Irish Prime Minister Bertie Ahern, Finland Prime Minister Paavo Lipponen, Belgian Prime Minister Jean-Luc Dehaene and so many more. The response rate of European countries was even up to 61%.<sup>40</sup> In contrast, it was even harder for me to understand that actually it was that difficult getting in contact with such a world famous maestro and his team (including the Italian Embassy and its cultural office).



I do not blame the Maestro though. On May 22nd 2009, I was in Beijing on behalf of Chinese fans to present a gift to him. He talked with his hands and was very courteous and accessible. Of course it is impossible for the Maestro to handle all his public relations issues personally. I think the main problem lies in the official website and the team behind it. They have the responsibility to establish an easily accessible public channel for the Maestro, listening to opinions from all sides, grasping and handling relevant issues and meticulously keeping track of data. Thus there would be a real exchange and it would help to maintain the good image of the Maestro. Maestro Morricone on the other hand should properly control the frequency of his concerts and all his other assignments. His precious old age should be taken into account, set apart the necessary time and energy to pay attention to these important public and historical issues.

### **Handbook and dispute**

2013 was the 10th anniversary of my website. Over the years, I have been hoping to compile a paper handbook for fans. This idea was because I had once encountered many difficulties in the early years. I wanted to provide a shortcut for the beginners to understand and help them to get familiar with the works of Morricone. Just like a compendium, something I could not find on the Internet. Especially in China this kind of reference book had never appeared, and was clearly needed. I also imagined that it could be useful for people outside China as well. Therefore I decided to use both Chinese and English text editing and published it. The main contents of this book were brief introductions of the 401 movies composed by Ennio Morricone (1961-2008) according to the official chronology. The name of the book is "Ennio Morricone Fans Handbook"<sup>41</sup>. The editing process was another big learning process. Although in the past I had

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<sup>39</sup> <http://morricone.cn/eng-fpages/eng-fpages-f1011-8.htm>

<sup>40</sup> <http://hty66.com/engweb/eng2-0.htm>

<sup>41</sup> <http://morricone.cn/ns-notes/ns-notes-006-eng.htm>

published a number of research articles on my website<sup>42</sup>, when I started this new job, I had to do a detailed, in-depth analysis and research again. Thus, a number of new problems appeared. They can be summed up, in the following three categories<sup>43</sup>:

1. “Music by Ennio Morricone” is shown in the opening credits of the movies or in IMDB, CHIMAI, SOUNDTRACKCOLLETOR and other important websites, but the movies do not appear in the official chronology. There are more than 100 movies in this category. Examples: **Machine Gun McCain** (1968), **Nessuno deve sapere** (1972, see “Maestro” issue #6, p.31), **Padre Pio - Tra cielo e terra** (TV 2000), **La Piovra-10** (TV 2001) etc. This may be due to the problem in finding a unique definition of which title should be used in the filmography. Without it, one is unable to distinguish between right or wrong data, and therefore this is the most urgent problem that should be solved first.
2. In contrast to the above, some movies have been included in the official filmography, but they are not mentioned by most of the other major websites. Although the number of the movies in this category is rather low, it is still a source of doubt and controversy. Examples: **Agente 077: Missione Bloody Mary** 1965 , **Morte di una ragazza per bene** (1999), **What Dreams May Come** (1999), etc.
3. There is no dispute in the credit, but there are some obscure problems, example **Alla scoperta dell'America** (1961), **Verrò** and **Vicino al ciel** (1961). And also music that was never released on any album or compilation as **Arabella** (1967), **Labbra di lurido blu** (1975), **Le Ricain** (1976, see “Maestro” Issue #3 p.19), **Todo Modo** (1976), **La luna** (1979), **Don't Kill God** (1984), **Con rabbia e con amore** (1995), etc.

I felt confused and puzzled again by such a large number of problems. Since the official website could not be contacted, I asked my friend Didier. He explained some of my problems, and also expressed that the official chronology is not satisfying. Didier told me that Morricone's team who had been working on solving these problems, have got in touch with him. It is expected that soon they will be able to discuss these issues in detail. In order to my reference, he also kindly send to me a very complete chronology edited carefully by himself.

Faced with this reality, as a Chinese who doesn't know much about the history of these arguments, I really didn't have the ability to determine which was right and which was wrong. After much consideration, I decided to edit the Handbook temporarily according to the official chronology, because after all, it is the official information. It should be Ennio Morricone's mouthpiece. At the same time, I also tried to add some explanations on to the more controversial parts in order to raise some interest which may eventually lead to some solutions.

In early 2013, the Handbook was published. It was well received by a great majority of the readers at home and also abroad, but there was also some criticism and dispute. These comments were mainly published in the United States<sup>44</sup>, France<sup>45</sup> and Italy on the official forums. But unfortunately the Italian forum has been closed by now (see “Maestro” issue #6 p.13), but its screenshots is still visible on my website<sup>46</sup>. The main content of the argument was still the

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<sup>42</sup> <http://morricone.cn/works/worksstudy-en001.htm> and <http://morricone.cn/ns-works/ns-works-006.htm>

<sup>43</sup> Due to space limitations, please download and read the document with more detailed explanation here <http://morricone.cn/temp/explanation.htm> 1.53M

<sup>44</sup> <http://filmscoremonthly.com/board/posts.cfm?threadID=95012&forumID=1&archive=0>

<sup>45</sup> <http://www.underscores.fr/forum/viewtopic.php?f=6&t=88&start=750>

<sup>46</sup> <http://morricone.cn/ns-notes/ns-notes-006add2-eng.htm>

chronology problem. A friend named Laurent said: "*Why did they bother reproducing at least one filmography in which ALLA SCOPERTA DELL'AMERICA has been erroneously dated from 1961 whereas we all know for sure it's a score from 1977, as is clearly demonstrated by the music itself?*" I understand his posting, but do not completely agree with him. First, I have already explained this problem in the Handbook<sup>47</sup>. "*Its production year is 1961 according to the official website, but it is 1964, 1971 or 1977 according to some unofficial sites. Here it is temporarily listed as 1961. We hope that at least the official website should have an accurate response for the issue.*" As for the "1977" statement, many websites have not recognized it. (It is shown as 1964 in IMDB and soundtrackcollector for example, as 1971 in the "Ennio Morricone Filmografie 1961-1971" p.42.) Second, as for saying "bother": it should be directed to the root cause, namely the Italian "Ennio Morricone's official website" first. There is a more detailed record on my website about this issue. Such arguments can often turn very unpleasant.

### **The new official website and more puzzles**

The "Maestro" issue #6 issued a message: "*The official website [www.enniomorricone.it](http://www.enniomorricone.it), including its forum, has been abandoned last August without prior notice. It then took weeks before a new one saw the light: [www.enniomorricone.org](http://www.enniomorricone.org). It has a few announcements by the Maestro but the rest is clearly still under construction....*" I went to see the new official website with very happy mood and hoped it would bring a new, long-awaited correct chronology, but the results were very disappointing. Its chronology was just a copy of the old website information. From 1961 to 2008, exactly a total of 401 movies, and also only up to 2008! Seeing such a result, I was not only disappointed, but even dismayed! Was this honestly the whole revision they offered? It was released with exactly the same content as six years ago with old news in many errors (up to May 2015 it was still the case!). And there was still no replacement for the original forum they had suddenly closed.

I wrote an email to ask my old friend Didier, He replied me that: "*the official filmography is very bad. I have been able to mention this to one of the managers, when Ennio was in Brussels. He said he would contact me about that, but he hasn't done it yet. Hopefully he will soon.*" Then I went to ask another old friend Michael, because he managed that forum during the past few years. He replied to me: "*The contents of the official site are not very well. They started the site with great plans and everything new in design, but then somehow it seems those responsible for the contents lost interest.... The forum had been cut off over night without telling anyone.... I was feeling quite disappointed myself when the site went down all from a sudden.*"

These answers seem to explain two questions: First, the management team is aware of the problems and willing to solve them; second, some unexplained reasons caused the sudden change, but it was done very recklessly. Differences of opinion? Budget shortfalls? Nevertheless, we have already seen that this is a really bad thing for everyone (including Maestro Ennio Morricone)

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<sup>47</sup> See P81 in the "Ennio Morricone Fans Handbook" (English version) and the explanation document here <http://morricone.cn/temp/explanation.htm> 1.53M

## Dawn and action

However, the society is always changing. I've seen some of the new dawn. A Chinese friend in German school Hongmei Wang recently mailed me a brochure he bought at the Morricone Oberhausen concert on March 26th, 2015. It has a total of 48 pages, printed with [www.enniomorricone.org](http://www.enniomorricone.org) in back cover. This was probably meant as a general information on Morricone for his European tour. I was most interested in the chronology offered here. After careful control I found that it was almost exactly the same with the old chronology concerning

the years 1961-1974. It seems out of an editing error in 1975, not only the year is missing, but also 10 movie titles. And in 1999, an interesting thing happened: That controversial movie **What Dreams May Come** had disappeared from the chronology. Was that a correction of an error in the chronology, or just an editorial error? Even more interesting was, that 19 movies were added from 2009-2013. That was a very good progress! At least people see a ray of hope. But only an insider would notice the subtle details.

For another good news see the "Maestro" issue #6 p.10. A book called ENNIO MORRICONE FILMOGRAFIE edited in German has been published. Although this book did not say who the author was, there were the words from "Maestro": *"However, it is clearly a very well done directory made by passionate and knowledgeable people."* Each directory includes 3 books. I have bought the first and third book via eBay. Although the contents still differ a lot with those of the official website, this issue will at least attract people's attention. So hopefully social force will propel the problem to be solved soon.

As a webmaster of a website dedicated to Morricone for such a long time puzzling over the official

website(s), I have gradually lost patience and confidence. For good development of my website, I have decided now to wait no longer. I will independently revise my own chronological directory for the third time based on the information I gathered from many famous websites. It will be divided into three parts (A, B, C). The A part will be the accepted directory, part B will be "agreed by most people", and finally part C part will deal with "many disputes". It may not be an ideal chronology, but at least it can fully reflect the current realities, with the living hope they can be solved one day soon.

## Suggestions and expectations

Ennio Morricone is not only the Italian national treasure, he also is the idol of global music lovers. To maintain his outstanding image, we all need to work together. His official website and the management team have an important responsibility. First the official website should provide a smooth contact channel, offer reliable replies on emails, so that they won't be ignored anymore. The forum should not be closed arbitrarily. This was a very rude behavior, which is unacceptable for everyone. (Even if there may be some difficulties, such a step should be announced in advance.) For the chronology it requires great determination, and organizational strength that the existing differences are studied thoroughly and get finally solved. **First there must be a unified definition for the chronology directory.** The situation is very complex,



because Morricone's works span a very long period of time, involving a huge amount of music. It has to be verified, if the music was actually composed by Morricone, and if so we have to identify if it was original music, pre-existing, covered, reused, arranged, supervised or even stock- or library-music. (See "Maestro" issue #3 p.27 appendix to Le Ricain). Morricone's involvements in soundtrack music are diverse: He is composer, conductor, music supervisor, music advisor, music selector, orchestrator, arranger, and in some cases it seems he cooperated with other composers. In order to decide what should be included in the chronology, and what should be skipped, there must be a clear, unified understanding. Otherwise chaos is inevitable. Even if we see, that this definition cannot be perfectly uniformed by relying solely on the strength of the Italian official website, they at least should have their own clear definition. They should publish this definition to the world, telling us why some movies are listed in the directory, while some movies are not, thus avoiding pointless arguments, and establishing the due authority of the official website. I think, if they can't solve the problem, then this website does not really qualify to be called "official", because not being correct in an authoritative way and being called "official", would harm to the reputation of the Maestro. This year the Maestro Ennio Morricone will turn 87. If these problems are not solved in his lifetime, they will be left to the next generation or even several generations to debate for sure. Second, there is the management of the Maestro. In general, they are responsible for the arrangement of Morricone's various assignments. We know the Maestro toured a lot during recent years, and according to Morricone's official website, for 2015 there are planned 26 shows for his European Concert Tour in total. In March alone there were 11 performances! This is the largest number of concerts by Morricone recorded over the years. Apart from the enthusiastic participation, many fans express doubts about such intensive assignments for an 87-years-old Maestro. I think it is time to let the long-living Maestro get the necessary rest. The team must not consider the commercial side alone, but also has to take into account the necessary time for the Maestro to recover and arrange his works. They should financially support the official website much stronger. They also have to put force into removing people's doubts leaving a detailed and reliable archive for the world and history. Finally, we also look forward to the Italian government and its relevant departments, who should give the full attention and loving care to their national treasure symbols. It's in their own interest, that they urge the responsible persons and departments to seriously address the many problems of long-lasting dispute, which effects the image of the Maestro. They should provide a satisfying answer for the fans worldwide. We are eagerly looking forward to this situation!

## The postscript

I have found a contacting email [info@enniomorricone.org](mailto:info@enniomorricone.org) at the bottom of the new official website's homepage. In order to try its effectiveness, I respectively sent 2 emails from my 2 email addresses (One is morricone@188.com, the other one is qilingren@hotmail.com) with the same content on May 18th 2015. Up to now (August 2015) I have not yet seen any reply. I'm not sure what the problem is at present, but it seems to prove one thing again: This channel is not very smooth!

发件人: 188.com  
日期: 2015年5月18日 17:45  
收件人: info@enniomorricone.org  
主题: 444-1505186-to Morricone's official website

Dear Sir,

I am a Ennio Morricone fan. I write to you from China.

I have focused on the Ennio Morricone's official website for ten years, because the "Music of Film" (filmography) is the basic program and guide for every and each fan's movie work. In this aspects, think the official website's information should be authoritative.

Unfortunately, this website seems no such authority, with many famous website contrast (www.filmof.it, CILIMA SOURCE TRACKCOLLECTOR...). There is a big difference and dispute in number and credit of the filmography for many years. It makes many fans have a lot of trouble and difficulty, especially for Oriental fans.

Not long ago, I know a good news from the "Maestro" magazine, a new official website appeared. I am with great hope to browse, but very disappointed to find that its filmography (Music of Film) almost exactly the same with old, and still from 1937-2009 (but now already is in 2015!) but all films and the program has also been abruptly shut down.

I am very puzzled and confused. I asked many Western friends, their feelings are the same with me. I do not know why this is? Recently I found this precious contact email address, I look forward to your reply and explained or very much for the following questions:

1. You know the filmography of many problems, and how do you solve these problems? When you are ready to edit? Can you send a detail documents about these problem to you if you need?

2. When can the forum, or it will be permanently closed?

3. I have important suggestion to Ennio Morricone's studio, can I though you forwarded to him? Or you can call me the other channels to contact with the maestro? Thank you very much!

Please look forward to your reply, and with best regards

Chinese aged fan I-AN