

Ambassador for Cultural Promotion Tan Dun lines up local young musicians to perform at Edinburgh International Festival and Xi'an concert (with photos)

Leveraging on his extensive network and experience, internationally renowned composer and conductor Tan Dun, appointed as Hong Kong's Ambassador for Cultural Promotion (ACP) earlier by the Culture, Sports and Tourism Bureau, lined up a number of local young musicians to perform at the opening programme of this year's Edinburgh International Festival as well as a concert in Xi'an, an ancient capital in China, with the support of the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD). The performances allowed the young musicians to showcase their talents in cultural arenas in the East and the West, reflecting Hong Kong's position as an East-meets-West centre for international cultural exchange.

The Edinburgh International Festival is an annual arts extravaganza gathering top-notch artists from around the world to bring audiences extraordinary works. Tan introduced Hong Kong soprano Louise Kwong, mezzo-soprano Samantha Chong and tenor Chen Chen to perform with the Royal Scottish National Orchestra and the Edinburgh Festival Chorus on August 5 for the opening programme "Buddha Passion", a piece by Tan that was inspired by stories of the Buddha depicted in the Mogao Caves in Dunhuang. The song, performed by vocalists in Chinese, English and Sanskrit, communicates across the divides of cultures and languages. The three young vocalists' performances were favourably reviewed by a number of critics in the United Kingdom, enabling them to gain prominence on the international performing arts scene.

Meanwhile, violinist Nina Wong, cellist Jia Nan and pianist Rachel Cheung were invited by Tan to perform, under his baton, Beethoven's Concerto for Violin, Cello, and Piano in C Major with the Xi'an Symphony Orchestra in the "From Beethoven to the First Emperor" concert in Xi'an on July 15. Tan also arranged for them to tour major historical monuments including the Terracotta Warriors and Horses. The trio agreed that the trip was an inspiring and invaluable opportunity to have exchanges with Tan about musical perspectives. The enhancement of their knowledge of Chinese history and culture also helped to inspire their musical imagination.

Tan has been serving as the ACP since January 1 this year. The LCSD hopes that the ACP, through providing local young artists with opportunities to participate in international arts festivals and outbound performances, can equip them with global perspectives and enrich their experience. Prior to the successful arranging of the above-mentioned young musicians to perform at the

Edinburgh International Festival and the Xi'an concert, Tan had earlier also invited Hong Kong young soprano Candice Chung to appear at the world premiere of "Requiem for Nature" at the Holland Festival.

€€€This year, Tan will continue to explore opportunities for local young artists to perform on the global stage, including performances with the Orchestra dell'Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia – Roma in November. The LCSD will continue to work with Tan to bring more local young artists out of Hong Kong, telling good stories of China and Hong Kong with the arts. This December, he will present the WE-make Series to Hong Kong audiences, a programme series that promotes exchanges and innovations of art forms of the East and West, bringing artists from diverse regions with different cultural backgrounds to present new experiences to audiences through symphony, rock, opera, dance and more.

