

Hong Kong 2022 International Society for the Performing Arts Congress being held online

The Hong Kong 2022 International Society for the Performing Arts (ISPA) Congress is being held from today (May 25) until May 27 (Friday) online under the theme of "To Connect Beyond", marking Hong Kong as the first Asian city that has won the bid for organising the ISPA Congress twice, following the success of hosting this international event in 2006.

Presented by the Leisure and Cultural Services Department, this ISPA mid-year Congress gathers some 400 leaders from the arts and cultural industry, and professionals of performing arts from over 30 regions. The programme includes panel discussions, keynotes, performance showcases and more as the Congress explores topics such as the connection between artists and the community, the relationship between culture territories and performing venues, and the inheritance of culture and art tech. In addition, 10 innovative projects selected by the ISPA will be presented to the delegates at the "Pitch New Works" sessions of the Congress. Among the 10 selected works, four are by Hong Kong groups including KNG Studio, City Contemporary Dance Company, Tang Shu-wing Theatre Studio and Hong Kong Dance Company.

Speakers from across the globe include conductor and composer Mr Tan Dun; the Chief Executive Officer of West Kowloon Cultural District Authority, Mrs Betty Fung; choreographer and art director Mr Shen Wei; Artistic Director of the Ronald O. Perelman Performing Arts Center in the United States Mr Bill Rauch; Artistic Director and Chief Executive of London's Sadler's Wells Theatre Sir Alistair Spalding; the Chief Executive Officer of the National Arts Council Singapore, Mrs Rosa Daniel, and many more.

Speaking at the opening of the Congress, the Acting Secretary for Home Affairs, Mr Jack Chan, said that Hong Kong is honoured to host this important international performance arts congress for the second time after the first hosting in 2006. Under the National 14th Five-Year Plan, the Central People's Government has supported Hong Kong as a hub for international arts and cultural exchanges, and as a springboard for enhanced networks between arts institutions and practitioners that brings new opportunities for intercultural collaboration in the region and worldwide.

Mr Chan said with the completion or imminent opening of a number of new or revitalised cultural projects, performance venues and facilities in Hong Kong, including the West Kowloon Cultural District, the East Kowloon Cultural Centre and the Tai Kwun, Hong Kong is about to turn a new page in its cultural development, striving to become vital connector between the Mainland and other global regions and as a hub, gathering creative inspirations and exploring infinite possibilities.

He said, "Through the many sessions of this virtual Congress, I am sure ISPA delegates will continue to connect and navigate as a community, enhancing mutual understanding, building a good foundation for closer collaboration in arenas outside the Congress and beyond."

The ISPA has established the ISPA Awards since 1975 to recognise outstanding individuals for their contribution to the performing arts and their communities. The 2022 award recipients were announced earlier. The "Distinguished Artist Award" went to renowned choreographer, dancer, artist and painter Mr Shen Wei, and the Artistic Director and Principal Conductor for Life of the Hong Kong Chinese Orchestra, Mr Yan Huichang. The Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Arts Development Council, Ms Winsome Chow, was awarded the "International Citation of Merit", and the "Angel Award" was presented to veteran arts administrator Professor Tseng Sun-Man. The award ceremony will be broadcast via the virtual platform during the Congress period.

Founded in 1948, the ISPA is a global association of more than 500 arts management leaders from 56 regions, who come together with the shared goal of strengthening and developing the arts internationally. It achieves this by building leadership abilities, recognising and discussing field-wide trends and new developments, and deepening global exchanges through the arts. ISPA members include presenters, performing arts organisations, artist managers, funders, consultants and other professionals working in the performing arts.