

# Serendipity of Plucked Strings From Hong Kong

Welcome the Lunar  
New Year with the  
Vibrant Sound of  
**HONG KONG'S  
PLUCKED STRINGS**,  
featuring students from  
**University of Sheffield**  
Filling Firth Hall

**Highlight Programme:**  
Chinese Ensemble  
*Autumn Moon  
Sanliu*

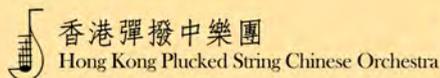


16 FEB 2026  
5:30 PM

Firth Hall,  
University of Sheffield

Free  
Admission

Co-presented by:



In collaboration with:



Confucius  
Institute.  
谢菲尔德大学孔子学院



# Hong Kong Plucked String Chinese Orchestra

**Music Director & Conductor: Ms CHAN Man-chong**

Rooted in the historic ensemble structure of the Tang Dynasty court, the Hong Kong Plucked String Chinese Orchestra (HKPSCO) stands as Hong Kong's only orchestra dedicated specifically to Chinese plucked string instruments. Enhanced by wind and percussion, the ensemble weaves an auditory tapestry where timeless heritage meets cutting-edge creativity. Under the visionary leadership of Director Ms CHAN Man-chong, an Honorary Fellow of Hong Kong Metropolitan University, the orchestra has garnered recognition for reimagining artistic expression and expanding the boundaries of traditional Chinese music.

Established in 1998, the orchestra comprises passionate musicians committed to preserving and developing the legacy of plucked string music. HKPSCO's acclaimed performances demonstrate remarkable versatility, from innovative fusion projects bridging genres like tango and jazz, to large-scale spectacles featuring hundreds of musicians. These endeavours highlight the orchestra's dedication to both artistic excellence and ambitious staging.

Beyond the stage, HKPSCO is deeply engaged in cultural exchange and education, with successful tours to festivals in Japan and Taiwan. Locally, community programmes and digital outreach—including performances with millions of online views—underscore its mission to share this dynamic art form. As the orchestra embarks on its UK tour, it continues to connect tradition with the future for global audiences.



# Programme

*Sanliu (Three Six)*

三六

Arr. GU Guanren

顧冠仁 編

*Autumn Moon*

秋月

LIU Feng-jin

Arr. LIN Wei-hua, LIU Gang

劉鳳錦 曲

林偉華、劉剛 編

*Peak Circle Walk*

漫步太平山

WONG Hok-yeung, Alfred

黃學揚 曲

*Jasmine Fragrance*

茉莉芬芳

(Zheng soloist: YIP Wing-hang, Yoyo)

HE Zhanhao

何占豪 曲

*Night Song*

夜歌

LAW Wai-lun

羅偉倫 曲

*Tango pour Claude*

Richard Galliano

Arr.: NG King-pan

李察·加里安諾 曲

伍敬彬 編

*Vita in motu* (World Première)

氣韻·生動 (世界首演)

TANG Wai-chung, Joyce

鄧慧中 編

# Programme Notes

## *Sanliu (Three Six)*

三六

Arr. GU Guanren

顧冠仁 編

Tracing its origin to one of the eight most famous pieces of “Jiangnan Silk and Bamboo” instrumental music, *Sanliu* is noted for its lively, tuneful melodies and is widely played on festive occasions to enhance a jubilant atmosphere. In this 1962 arrangement for plucked string ensemble, GU Guanren added further musical interest through structural alterations and contrasts in speed, colour, and dynamics.

## *Autumn Moon*

秋月

LIU Feng-jin | Arr. LIN Wei-hua, LIU Gang

劉鳳錦 曲 | 林偉華、劉剛 編

Scored for a plucked string ensemble, *Autumn Moon* begins with a collaboration between the *Yangqin* and *Zheng*, where freely expressive melodies are vividly descriptive of the peace and serenity of an autumn evening. Next, the *Pipa* enters with a lilting Jiangnan folk melody, conjuring the image of a fairy dancing gracefully under the moonlight. This is followed by a more vigorous Allegretto, after which the *Yangqin* and *Zheng* return to conclude with a vivid musical portrayal of the tranquility of deep autumn.

## *Peak Circle Walk*

漫步太平山

WONG Hok-yeung, Alfred

黃學揚 曲

*Peak Circle Walk*, a beautiful nature trail enveloping the top of the Hong Kong Victoria Peak, takes some of the best panoramic views over the Victoria Harbour, as well as the scenic side of Hong Kong Island. Whether walking in the morning or in the evening, millions of visitors every year are drawn by the world-famous vista, which includes the lush tropical forests and extensive wildlife.

# Programme Notes

## *Jasmine Fragrance*

茉莉芬芳

HE Zhanhao

何占豪 曲

Composed in 1991 by Maestro HE Zhanhao, this classic piece is based on the traditional Jiangsu folk song *Jasmine Flower* (Mo Li Hua). The melody is graceful and fluid, filled with delicate and tender emotions, unfolding like a scroll painting that captures the various delicate postures and enchanting fragrance of jasmine blossoms in full bloom. Through praise of the flower, the composer subtly depicts the pure and gentle emotions between lovers, creating a lingering poetic atmosphere.

## *Night Song*

夜歌

LAW Wai-lun

羅偉倫 曲

The composer has made use of many characteristic Yunnan folk tunes to depict a vibrant village bonfire up in the mountains. The music begins with an introduction played by the bass instruments, gradually revealing a lilting melody to which villagers heartily sing and dance with increasing vigor. However, as night falls and the crowd begins to disperse, the lively folk song fades into a lyrical night song lingering under a peaceful sky.

## *Tango pour Claude*

Richard Galliano | Arr.: NG King-pan

李察·加里安諾 曲 | 伍敬彬 編

Originally composed by French accordion virtuoso Richard Galliano, this piece is a modern tango standard brimming with passion and rhythmic drive. This special arrangement by Dr. NG King Pan reimagines the work through the unique soundscape of the Chinese plucked string ensemble. By transferring the breathing dynamics of the accordion to the percussive strumming and rapid tremolos of the *Yangqin*, *Sheng*, *Pipa*, and *Ruan*, this performance explores new sonic possibilities of pluck string music. It demonstrates the surprising versatility of traditional Chinese instruments, showcasing their ability to capture the fiery spirit of the tango while adding a distinct Eastern timbre.

# World Première

*Vita in motu*

氣韻 · 生動

TANG Wai-chung, Joyce

鄧慧中 曲

*Vita in motu* (2026) (Latin for “life in a state of motion”) draws on qiyun shengdong, the first principle of Xie He’s Six Principles of Chinese painting, where vitality is understood as an inner resonance that animates form from within.

Commissioned by the Hong Kong Plucked Strings Chinese Orchestra for their 2026 UK tour, the instrumentation includes a Western string orchestra, conceived for exchange with a local orchestra in the UK. The music unfolds from a spacious and open beginning, gradually moving toward an awakening pulse, tracing a passage from suspended breath to collective motion. Vitality slowly comes into view through touch, vibration, and flow.

## About the Composer



Joyce Tang is a composer whose work has been described by Ablaze Records as “incisive and brilliant... a fresh compositional voice.” Her interdisciplinary output spans orchestral, chamber, vocal, choral, electroacoustic, and theatrical forms, and has been performed internationally at major platforms including the Hong Kong Arts Festival, ISCM festivals, Canberra International Music Festival, ACL Conferences, PASIC, International Rostrum of Composers, ICMC, JIM, Le French May, and Deutschlandfunk Forum Neuer Musik.

She has received commissions from ensembles and institutions such as the Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra, Hong Kong Sinfonietta, Hong Kong New Music Ensemble, Romer String Quartet, Trio Morisot, ToolBox Percussion, the Hong Kong Arts Festival, Tai Kwun, and the Korean Traditional Performing Arts Foundation.

Recent projects include *\_Since When\_* (2023, with Chow Yiu Fai), winner of the 2023 CASH Golden Sail Award, alongside works for percussion, chamber, and vocal ensembles. Tang holds a PhD from the University of Hong Kong and teaches at the Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts.

## **Members of the Tour**

Music Director (Acting): Dr. NG King-pan

Composer: Dr. TANG Wai-chung, Joyce

Tour Producer / Concertmaster: YIP Wing-hang, Yoyo

Tour Manager (Music): SHIU Tsz-wai, Benny

Tour Manager (Marketing): SZETO Che-yan, Christy

Education and Outreach Manager: WONG Siu-man, Charmaine

## **Orchestra Members**

### ***Pipa***

WONG Siu-man, Charmaine

WONG Ka-man, Judy

Yip Sin Hang, Sindy

### ***Yangqin***

SHIU Tsz-wai, Benny

### ***Zheng***

YIP Wing-hang, Yoyo

### ***Zhongruan***

TAM Pok-wai

HA Ka-yee, Carrie

### ***Daruan***

MUN Ho-yin, Tommy

### ***Sheng***

SZETO Che-yan, Christy

### **Percussion**

TSE Tsz-chung, Eddy

LIU Sze-wai, Mickey

# About the Instruments

The music you will hear tonight is brought to life through a family of traditional Chinese plucked string instruments, each with its own unique voice, history, and character.

## *Pipa* (琵琶)

Often referred to as the “Chinese lute”, the pipa’s distinctive pear-shaped body and bent neck have evolved over two millennia. Originally played horizontally with a large plectrum, modern technique uses the fingernails of the right hand to produce a remarkable range of sounds from delicate, harp-like arpeggios to vigorous, drum-like rolls created by strumming all four strings. Its expressive power allows it to narrate epic tales, depict serene moonlit scenes, or evoke the tumult of battle. A cornerstone of both classical and folk traditions, the Pipa remains a beloved solo instrument and an indispensable voice in the orchestra.



## *Ruan* (阮)

Named after the legendary musician Ruan Xian of the 3rd century, this moon-shaped lute is celebrated for its warm, rounded tone. Traditionally used for accompaniment in Chinese opera, it has found a prominent role in modern orchestras, providing rich harmonic support. The Zhongruan (medium) is the melodic heart of the ruan family, with a voice that sings clearly in the mid-range. The Daruan (large), tuned like a cello, offers a deep, resonant foundation that anchors the plucked string section. Played with a plectrum, its sound is mellow and sustained, creating a harmonious bridge between the higher and lower instruments.



# About the Instruments

## *Yangqin* (揚琴)

Introduced to China via the Silk Road several centuries ago, the Yangqin was adapted into a cornerstone of Chinese music. Its trapezoidal body holds rows of metal strings struck with two lightweight bamboo beaters. The player can achieve incredible speed and articulation, producing everything from crystalline, single-note melodies to rapid, cascading passages and full, resonant chords. Its bright, percussive, yet singing tone makes it the “piano of the plucked string ensemble”, capable of carrying the melody, enriching harmony, and driving rhythm.



## *Zheng* (箏)

As one of China’s oldest zithers, the Zheng’s origins are intertwined with ancient court and folk music. Its movable bridges allow for precise tuning and microtonal flexibility. The player’s right hand plucks and strums the strings, often adorned with fingerpicks, while the left hand presses the strings to the left of the bridges to create graceful pitch bends and vibrato, a technique central to its soulful, vocal quality. From the intimate 16-string version to the resonant 21- and 23-string concert models, the Zheng can paint vast sonic landscapes, from gentle, rippling water to sweeping, majestic vistas.



# About the Instruments

## *Sheng (笙)*

The Sheng is a marvel of ancient engineering, a mouth-blown free-reed instrument made of vertical bamboo pipes set into a small wind chamber. It is one of the few traditional instruments capable of producing rich, polyphonic chords, giving it a unique role in providing harmonic texture and ethereal ambiance. Its sound, often described as resembling a cluster of soft, breathy organ pipes, blends seamlessly with plucked strings, adding layers of warmth and atmospheric depth. As a vital part of both folk ensembles and imperial court music for millennia, the Sheng represents the enduring harmony between breath, reed, and resonance in Chinese musical history.



## *The Ensemble*

Together, the above instruments create a tapestry of sound unparalleled in its textural diversity. In tonight's concert, they will weave melodies that reflect both the deep tradition of Chinese music and its vibrant, contemporary spirit.

We invite you to listen closely to the distinct voice of each instrument and to the beautiful conversations they create together

**Discover more at [www.hkpsco.org](http://www.hkpsco.org) or connect via Facebook and Instagram (@hkpsco).**