

First Asia+ Festival to showcase endless possibilities of Asia and beyond this autumn (with photos)

Presented by the Culture, Sports and Tourism Bureau and organised by the Leisure and Cultural Services Department, the Asia+ Festival will be held in October and November, with a focus on Asia and to celebrate the cultural diversity of the continent and Belt and Road regions.

Deeply rooted in Chinese culture and geographically situated at the heart of Asia, Hong Kong has long seen the dynamic fusion of Asian cultures and other parts of the world. Under the auspices of the National 14th Five-Year Plan, Hong Kong is comprehensively developing into an East-meets-West centre for international cultural exchanges.

The new Asia+ Festival has garnered the support of consulates and representatives of overseas cultural organisations in Hong Kong to bring audiences stage performances, exhibitions and an outdoor carnival with participation from over 20 countries, to showcase their unique cultures and arts. Participating countries include Bangladesh, Cambodia, Egypt, Indonesia, Iran, Japan, Kazakhstan, Korea, Kuwait, Laos, Malaysia, Mongolia, Nepal, Pakistan, the Philippines, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Türkiye, the United Arab Emirates and Vietnam. Eleven programmes will be featured in this year's festival. Brief introductions are as follows:

Persian Elegant Authentic Cultural Events (PEACE) (October 2 to 15)

Handmade carpets are a major example of Persian handicrafts, known far and wide for their excellence. Exquisite handicrafts, carpets, books and more will be showcased in the exhibition to promote public understanding of Iran's culture and arts.

NOON (October 7)

NOON, an experimental ensemble consisting of three musicians from the United Arab Emirates redefines East-West musical fusion. Their creative work is an unusual potpourri of traditional Oud music from the Middle East, polyrhythmic jazz and rock, with heavy shades of funk groove, African and Indian percussive rhythms as well as electronic effects.

Vanishing (October 13 and 14)

Set in the capital city of Korea (now Seoul) in 1925, the original Korean musical "Vanishing" recounts the adventure of two medical students who run into a vampire in an abandoned house, offering a deep contemplation on the life topics of death and eternity. This is a programme of Festive Korea 2023.

Persian Elegant Authentic Carpet Exhibition II (October 16 to 22)

Iranian and Persian handicrafts such as carpets, enamel and Termeh textiles will be on display to promote the arts and intangible cultural heritage of Iran.

The Once and Future (October 21 and 22)

The multimedia concert "The Once and Future" is a seamless blend of film, live music, vocals and a laser display, inviting audiences to explore the essence of humanity together. The programme features a film directed by acclaimed Singaporean filmmaker Yeo Siew Hua (Locarno Film Festival and Golden Horse Awards winner). The film was shot entirely in Argentina, with an original musical score written by composer Eugene Birman and performed live by the ZeMu! Ensemble Berlin, a group stemming from the Berliner Philharmoniker. Also performing is young Indian vocalist Anandi Bhattacharya, who will personify artificial intelligence. This is a programme of the New Vision Arts Festival 2023.

RAIN (November 10 to 12)

Adapted from the famous work "Rain" by British novelist Somerset Maugham in the early 20th century, Japanese choreographer Ryu Suzuki partners with visual artist Shinji Ohmaki and sound artist evala in the dance work "RAIN", a stage show that shines a light on human relationships under the pandemic. This is a programme of the New Vision Arts Festival 2023.

Asian Ethnic Cultural Performances 2023 (November 12)

This year's "Asian Ethnic Cultural Performances", with "Crowning the Harvest Hues" as the main theme, showcases cultural offerings from over 20 countries and regions including ethnic dance, music performances featuring rarely seen instruments, delicate handicrafts and more.

Asian Ethnic Cultural Performances 2023: Charm of Hues – National Costume and Headdress Exhibition (November 12 to 19)

Among four basic human needs – clothing, dining, living and travelling – clothing may come first. People have worn various forms of clothes and decorations at festive events, ethnic celebrations and art performances since the beginning of time, shaping their own cultures with distinct qualities. In this year's Asian Ethnic Cultural Performances, an eight-day ethnic costume and headdress exhibition is added, displaying beautiful art pieces to showcase the fascinating social landscapes of the Asian region.

K-Drama OST Live Concert (November 18)

Original singers, along with members of the orchestras and bands who produced iconic original soundtracks (OSTs) of K-drama, will perform enchanting tunes from popular Korean TV series including "Descendants of the

Sun", "King the Land", and many more. In addition to K-drama, the programme features a session dedicated to Hong Kong cinema where a local artist will sing famous tunes known by locals. This is a programme of Festive Korea 2023.

Egypt Youth Choir (November 19)

Music is an integral part of Egyptian culture, almost indispensable to people's everyday lives. Youths from local Egyptian communities, forming the Egypt Youth Choir, will perform Egyptian songs and Coptic hymns in Arabic, English and Coptic languages.

Encore Series: Piano Recital by Seong-Jin Cho (November 28)

Seong-Jin Cho was brought to the world's attention in 2015 for winning the First Prize at the Chopin International Competition at the tender age of 21. In the forthcoming Hong Kong recital, Cho will grace audiences with a diverse repertoire spanning the late 18th century to the early 20th century.

Several programmes of the Asia+ Festival offer fringe activities such as workshops, a stage tour and a pre-concert talk. For more details of the festival, please visit www.lcsd.gov.hk/en/asiaplus.



