

World-renowned 12 Cellists of the Berliner Philharmoniker to make Hong Kong debut in July (with photos)

The 12 Cellists of the Berliner Philharmoniker are to make their Hong Kong debut in July as part of the "Great Music 2025", presented by the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD). This unique ensemble is as renowned for their versatility as for their musical mastery. In this concert, they will perform a diverse repertoire ranging from classical music, tango music, jazz and spirituals to French chansons and film scores. Showcasing an incredible sense of musical unity, the concert promises an acoustic feast that interweaves classical and crossover music.

In 1972, a radio production of Julius Klengel's "Hymnus" for 12 cellos with members of the Berliner Philharmoniker's cello section provided the impetus for the founding of a soloist ensemble of this calibre. The upcoming concert will open with this seminal piece, followed by the ensemble's first commissioned work, Boris Blacher's "Blues, Espagnola, Rumba Philharmonica". The programme also includes Fauré's "Pavane, Op. 50", Jean Françaix's "Aubade – Presto" and Stephan Koncz's "Swing on Dvořák".

The ensemble will also present an array of arranged works, featuring beloved French chansons "Pigalle" and "Sous le ciel de Paris", two spirituals "Nobody Knows" and "Let My People Go", as well as Piazzolla's tango work "Engeltrilogie". The 12 Cellists will also perform film scores from the movie "Titanic"; "Clap Yo' Hands" that featured in the film "Funny Face"; and the jazz classic "Caravan" that has been used in numerous films, showcasing the cello's astonishing versatility across genres.

The 12 Cellists of the Berliner Philharmoniker, appearing as an independent ensemble, is described as "an orchestra within an orchestra". They captivate audiences of all ages with their alternation of seriousness and humour, depth and lightness. They frequently perform in Berlin and around the world, and embark on large-scale tours. The 12 Cellists have accompanied the German president as cultural ambassadors of Berlin. Their albums regularly make the classical music charts and were recognised with the ECHO Klassik Awards in 2001, 2005 and 2017.

"Concert by The 12 Cellists of the Berliner Philharmoniker" will be staged at 8pm on July 9 (Wednesday) at the Concert Hall of the Hong Kong Cultural Centre. Tickets priced at \$350, \$550, \$750, \$950 and \$1,150 are now available at URB TIX (www.urbtix.hk). For telephone bookings, please call 3166 1288. Package discounts will be available for purchasing tickets for the "Concert by The 12 Cellists of the Berliner Philharmoniker" and "Piano Recital by Mikhail Pletnev" (to be held on June 17). For programme enquiries and concessionary schemes, please call 2268 7321 or visit www.lcsd.gov.hk/CE/CulturalService/Programme/en/music/programs_1837.html.

A pre-concert talk entitled "When Cellists Come Together" (in Cantonese) will be held at 6.45pm on July 9 at Level 4 Foyer Reception Area, Auditoria Building, Hong Kong Cultural Centre. The speaker will be music practitioner Jimmy Shiu. Admission is free, with limited seats available on a first-come, first-served basis.

The "Great Music 2025", presented by the LCSD, returns this year with star-studded performances running from June to November. Renowned musicians and ensembles from all over the world will come to Hong Kong to perform an array of programmes, showcasing the city as an East-meets-West centre for international cultural exchange. For more details, please visit www.lcsd.gov.hk/CE/CulturalService/Programme/en/music/groups_1840.html.

