



去唱自己的歌

Our Song, Our Voice, Our Journey

The Chinese University of Hong Kong Chorus
香港中文大學合唱團

June 23 2025
6:30 p.m.
Ruth Lilly Performance Hall
University of Indianapolis
Indianapolis, IN

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ICDA Lecture-Performance

LEON CHU 朱振威 | Conductor and Speaker

ALEXANDER WONG 黃歷琛 | Pianist

VINCENT LEUNG 梁家豪 | Pianist

Monday, June 23 at 6:30 p.m.

Ruth Lilly Performance Hall, University of Indianapolis

Program

Cynthia Wong: The Song That's Come to Be

Hins Cheung (Alexander Wong arr.): Imaginary Fairground

Jodie Kwok: Memories

Frankie Ho: The Crying Bride and the Bridal Party (selections)

Alfred Wong: Choral Suite, "1894 Hong Kong Plague"

* Surtitles in Chinese and English (translation by Dr. Joanna C. Lee & Ken Smith) will be projected throughout the performance.

The Chinese University of Hong Kong Chorus



Since its establishment in 1972 by a group of students, The Chinese University of Hong Kong Chorus (CU Chorus) has been dedicated to bringing high-quality choral music to society. Over the decades, generations of students and alumni have worked tirelessly to inspire, educate, and entertain the public, enriching their lives. Today, the CU Chorus has become one of the most representative and prestigious local university choirs in Hong Kong, a source of pride for the community.

From its early days with student conductors to the appointment of a Music Director, the CU Chorus has brought together talented singers from various departments across the university. Through rigorous training, the Chorus strives to deliver outstanding performances. The repertoire is diverse, spanning standard repertoire, avant-garde experiments, jazz, pop, and musical theater, ensuring fresh experiences for both members and audiences each year.

The CU Chorus has been deeply involved in the development of new Hong Kong choral music since its 1975 world premiere of *And When I Die* by Richard Tsang. In addition to performing classic works by

renowned composers, the Chorus has commissioned and premiered new works by emerging composers.

Although Cantonese choral music has always been a part of the Chorus' repertoire, the 2014 concert "A Tribute to Joseph Koo" marked the beginning of its commitment to promoting Cantonese choral music. To date, the Chorus has commissioned nearly 30 composers and premiered over 50 original and arranged Cantonese choral pieces. In 2018 and 2022, it launched the CU Chorus Choral Series and CU Chorus CantoPop Series, making sheet music of Cantonese choral music more accessible to other choirs. These publications have been purchased by groups not only in Greater China but also in Europe and the Americas, enabling non-Cantonese speakers to sing Cantonese songs with ease.

The Chorus' efforts in promoting Cantonese choral music have been widely recognized. In July 2019, it was invited to perform an all-Cantonese program at the Taipei International Choral Festival in Taiwan, where it also hosted a lecture to introduce the characteristics of Cantonese choral compositions. In August 2024, the Chorus was invited to share its experiences singing Cantonese songs at "Tai Kwun Conversations". Later that year, it participated in the 4th Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macau Greater Bay Area Cultural and Arts Festival, performing Cantonese pop song arrangements in the concert "Songs Echo My Voice". The Chorus will make its U.S. debut in June 2025 at the Indiana Choral Directors Association Summer Conference, where it will present a Cantonese choral demonstration performance, and will also collaborate with the Indianapolis Symphonic Choir for another exchange performance.

Members of CU Chorus

Leon Chu, Music Director
Vincent Leung, Pianist-in-residence
Albert Lim, Vocal Coach

Soprano

Joey Chan
Judy Cheng
Hau-yi Cheung
Sophie Fung
Shirley Hui
Kirstie Law
Eunice Mau
Yoyo Ng
Heather Pong
Beatrice Poon
Pauline Yeung

Tenor

Hugo Chan
Terry Kuk
Vincent Lam
Antonius Wong

Alto

Alison Cheung
Angela Choy
Yeukie Lee
Mendy Li
Chloe Tam
Kelly Tang
Queenie Tung
Cherry Wong
Wenxu Zhang

Bass

Ryan Chen
Kelvin Cheung
Raymond Cheung
Joel Kwok
Michael Leung
David Wong
Myron Wong

Crew

Monica Chan
Caroline Yang

Leon Chu 朱振威, conductor and speaker

From a grassroots upbringing to becoming a leading advocate for Cantonese choral music, Leon Chu's musical journey has been full of unexpected turns. In 2000, he entered The Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK) to study Cultural Studies and Linguistics. He was invited back in 2006 to direct the CU Chorus, marking the start of his professional career in music. Since 2008, he has been trained in choral conducting with Kåre Hanken (Norway), Theodora Pavlovitch (Bulgaria), and Gábor Hollerung (Hungary).

Under his leadership, the CU Chorus has flourished into one of Hong Kong's top university choirs, known for its creative and educational focus. Leon has led the choir on 16 international tours and produced two albums. One of them, *Spring Breeze Kisses My Face: Choral Works by Jan Tien-hao*, won the 2014 IFPI Best-Selling Classical/Opera Album award. He also expanded the choir's efforts into sheet music publishing and digital streaming, with a strong emphasis on Cantonese choral music.

Leon has become a prominent promoter of Cantonese choral music in recent years. Drawing on his linguistic background, he has developed unique methods for Cantonese vocal performance. Through the CU Chorus, he has commissioned and published numerous original and arranged Cantonese choral works, with digital scores reaching choirs as far as in North America. His standardized notation system for Cantonese pronunciation has been adopted by other local composers. He has delivered lectures on Cantonese choral music in Shanghai (2008), Changhua (2009), and at the 2019 Taipei International Choral Festival, where he addressed the challenge of tonal language in a talk. In 2024, his poster presentation on teaching Cantonese pronunciation to Mandarin-speaking singers was selected for the TCCSL International Conference 2024 at The Hong Kong Polytechnic University.

Alexander Wong 黃歷琛, pianist & arranger

Alexander Wong holds a Master of Music degree in Piano Accompanying and Chamber Music from Eastman School of Music and a Bachelor of Arts degree in Music (first class honors) from The Chinese University of Hong Kong. His major mentors include Jeffie Leung, Dr. Mary Wu, Wong Kin Yu and Dr. Jean Barr. After his graduation, he participated in the Hawaii Performing Arts Festival as a collaborative pianist in the Voice Program. He was then employed as a full-time répétiteur at Musica Viva through Hong Kong Arts Development Council's "Music Artistic Internship Scheme" (2015-17). In recent years he collaborated in various productions such as *Book of Longing*, *Anna Bolena*, *La finta semplice*, *L'impresario in angustie*, and *Maria Stuarda*. Alexander is currently an accompanist of The Hong Kong Children's Choir, St. Paul's Co-educational College Primary School Choir, St. Paul's College Primary School Choir, The Learners Chorus and Musica Viva.

Vincent Leung 梁家豪, pianist

Vincent Leung is currently a first-year medical student at The Chinese University of Hong Kong. In 2021, he obtained the Licentiate of Trinity College London (LTCL) Performance Diploma in Piano Recital. In the same year he also received the Silver Award in the Violin Sonata category of the Hong Kong Schools Music Festival. He has also performed piano quintet ensembles. Passionate in choral music and arts, he has served as the pianist of The Chinese University of Hong Kong Chorus since 2024. His recent performances include: the 2024 Zhuhai-Hong Kong-Macao Choral Concert "Songs Echo My Voice" and CUHK Art Museum's "Spring Fest: Muse Moments". He is also a founding member of The Forth Voice.

Program Notes

The Song That's Come to Be 《已成之歌》

Music: Cynthia Wong 黃旨穎

Words: Serena Tong 唐家穎

In December 2022, to celebrate its 30th anniversary, Hong Kong's leading musical theatre company Actors' Family staged a Jukebox musical *My Moon, Your Return*. The production, centered around the fictional composer Ho Nin-fat, wove together highlights from the company's celebrated past productions, offering a heartfelt tribute to Hong Kong's homegrown musical theatre tradition.

At the heart of the show was an original finale, *The Song That's Come to Be*, composed by Cynthia Wong with lyrics by Serena Tong. Steeped in the rich colors of blues and gospel, the piece provided a rousing conclusion to the evening, performed with full ensemble and choreography. It captured the enduring hope that true artistry will always find its audience. The choral version of *The Song That's Come to Be* is arranged by Cynthia Wong.

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Cynthia Wong earned her Master of Fine Arts in Musical Theatre Writing from New York University and her Bachelor of Music (Composition) from The Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts. Her clarinet solo *A Daisy Chrysanthemum* premiered at Carnegie Hall in New York. Her full-length musical *Jennifer the Unspecial: Time Travel, Love Potion & 8th Grade* won the Outstanding Musical Award at the 2011 Ronald M. Ruble New Play Festival. Cynthia is currently the Resident Composer at Actors' Family and a part-time lecturer at The Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts.

Imaginary Fairground 《隱形遊樂場》

Music: Hins Cheung 張敬軒

Words: Wyman Wong 黃偉文

Arrangement: Alexander Wong 黃歷琛

Imaginary Fairground is a single by Hong Kong singer Hins Cheung. It was first performed on 18 March 2023, during the third show of “The Prime Classics Hins Live in London” concert. The song was officially released by FITTO Records on 20 April 2023, along with its music video on YouTube, marking it as one of Hins’ title songs for the year. In addition to the studio version, there are six other versions of the song released by Hins, making a total of seven.

For this choral arrangement, arranger Alexander Wong borrowed elements from *Chevaux de bois*, the fourth song from French composer Claude Debussy’s song cycle *Ariettes oubliées*, to echo the imagery of the carousel in the lyrics.

Memories 《回憶》

Music: Jodie Kwok 郭曉楠

Words: Carl Chan 陳卓楓

Premiered in 2022, *Memories* is a Cantonese choral work for mixed voices, composed by Jodie Kwok for her undergraduate graduation recital. The lyrics were penned by her close friend, Carl Chan, with the music written afterwards in response. Before composing the piece, the composer knew she would soon be leaving Hong Kong to continue her journey abroad. The lyricist chose to write on the theme of memory, capturing its dual nature: sweet and tender on one hand, yet aching and melancholic on the other. The text quietly questions whether, in the end, memories are more comforting or more cruel.

The song is structured in three broad sections, following the emotional arc of the lyrics. The first two explore the beauty and sorrow of remembrance, respectively set in G major and a contrastingly intense F-sharp minor. The third section, a more reflective passage that asks what memory truly means, shifts to D major, the dominant of the opening key. Just as the harmony seems poised to return to the familiar warmth of G major, two wistful statements of the word “memory” emerge in dissonance. Yet the piece does not resolve where it began; it comes gently to rest in D major. For better or worse, the past remains behind us.

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Born and raised in Hong Kong, Jodie Kwok holds a BA (Honours) in Music degree from The Chinese University of Hong Kong, majoring in composition under the tutelage of Prof. Chan Kai-young, Dr. Lo Hau-man, and Prof. Wendy Lee.

Jodie is an active chorister who has sung with various choirs, including Die Konzertisten and CU Chorus. She has also appeared as a guest singer in concerts conducted by Gey Teal Girls’ Choir and Hong Kong Reading Singers in the United Kingdom. Jodie is currently a member of the Reading Phoenix Choir.

Jodie obtained a Licentiate Diploma in Piano Recital with distinction from Trinity College London in 2017. While in university, she majored in piano under the tutelage of Ms. Aywen Wang. She has also studied organ under the direction of Dr. Anne Lam, and voice under the guidance of Mr. Caleb Woo. As a pianist, she has performed in various recitals at CUHK, including Midday Oasis and French May. She is also an experienced accompanist, having served as pianist and vocal instructor at Yip’s Children’s Choir, as well as organist at St. Francis Church.

The Crying Bride and the Bridal Party 《開嘆情》 (Selections)

Music: Frankie Ho

Words: Folk Text

The tradition of “bridal laments”—where brides sing and weep before leaving their family homes—is found across China, and Cantonese-speaking regions are no exception. In Hong Kong, “wedding laments” have been inscribed onto the city’s Intangible Cultural Heritage inventory. These poignant performances gave brides a rare moment of personal expression: through song, they could pour out their sorrow over parting from loved ones and the pain of leaving their parents, to whom they could no longer show filial piety. In days when marriages were arranged, often without the bride’s voice or choice, this ritual lament was perhaps the only time she was truly allowed to speak her heart. Indeed, so central was this performance that a bride who failed to sing with sufficient grief risked being scorned by her community as overly eager to marry.

The Crying Bride and the Bridal Party is a six-movement a cappella choral suite composed by Frankie Ho on commission from the CU Chorus. The lyrics are drawn from a collection of bridal laments recorded in the late Qing and early Republican era, compiled by Lin Weidi in *Cantonese Folk Songs and Customs* (1990). Though touched by the hand of literati editors, these verses remain a rare and invaluable record of Cantonese sung traditions over a century old. Frankie set these historical texts to newly composed music, creating a compact 20-minute suite that evokes an entire night’s bridal lament ceremony.

The piece is written for a five-part mixed chorus in the style of the European Renaissance, with subtle allusions to classical repertoire woven throughout. Yet within this Western framework, Frankie infuses the score with the essence of Chinese musical idioms, forging a compelling cultural synthesis.

I. The Crying Bride– The bride asks her father to wait for her return three days after the wedding.

II. Sing-Song – Villagers, men and women alike, gather to escort the bride, flirting and teasing along the way.

III. The Bride Takes Leave From Her Home (1) – The bride tearfully bids farewell to her loved ones, overcome with sorrow.

IV. The Bride Takes Leave From Her Home (2) – The bride offers heartfelt blessings to those she leaves behind.

V. Cursing the Matchmaker – The bride curses the matchmaker who arranged the unwanted marriage.

VI. Lamentations of 12 Months – In a final farewell, the bride names a different flower for each month of the year, blessing her parents with poetic grace.

Only movement II, III, V will be performed tonight.

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Frankie Ho graduated from both School of Music and School of Drama of The Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts. He studied under Law Wing-fai (Composition) and Anthony Chan (Directing). Frankie is now a member of the Composers and Authors Society of Hong Kong. Frankie has been the composer, arranger, and music director for many stage productions.

Choral Suite, “1894 Hong Kong Plague”

合唱組曲《太平山之疫》

Music: Alfred Wong 黃學揚

Words: Chris Shum 岑偉宗

Premiered by the Hong Kong Repertory Theatre in January 2016, *1894 Hong Kong Plague – A Musical* is a musical set during the devastating bubonic plague outbreak that swept through Hong Kong in 1894. With music by Alfred Wong, lyrics by Chris Shum, and a book co-written by Gerard Tsang and Anthony Chan, the work follows the journey of a family of traditional Chinese medicine practitioners, including the elder physician Huang Qin-zhou, his Western-trained son Huang Li-ren, their apprentice Li Zi-cun, and adopted daughter Huang Yan. Against a backdrop of fear and grief, the musical explores how East and West, once divided in medical practice and philosophy, learn to work together in the face of an unfamiliar and fast-spreading epidemic.

Commissioned by the CU Chorus, composer Alfred Wong has reimagined material from the original stage work into a new choral suite of the same title. Drawing on key moments from the musical, the suite uses recurring musical motifs and tightly woven vocal textures to capture both the terror and resilience experienced by Hong Kong people more than a century ago.

I. Heaven’s Blessing – Adapted from the musical’s opening scene, this solo by Huang Yan expresses a deep compassion for the suffering of others.

II. Love at Heaven’s Gate – From Scene 13. Having contracted the plague, Huang Yan agrees to undergo Western medical treatment at Huang Liren’s urging. Childhood sweethearts, they finally speak their hearts in the shadow of death.

III. The Bitter Sea – From Scene 9 and set aboard the quarantine ship “Home of the Sea”, this chorus expresses the shared helplessness of

patients and carers alike in the face of seemingly inescapable death.

IV. Dusk – From the final scene. Following Huang Yan’s death, the three male protagonists reflect on her sacrifice. Their grief gives way to a fragile but enduring hope for the future.

This new work is commissioned by CU Chorus Association Limited in 2025 with sponsorship from CASH Music Fund.

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Alfred Wong was born in Hong Kong. His music has been performed at numerous international events, including the International Society for Contemporary Music Festival in Sweden, the Waterloo Music Festival in the UK, the Colorado Music Festival in the United States, the Beijing Modern Music Festival, the Macau International Music Festival, and the Singapore International Band Festival. His accolades include the 2014 CASH Golden Sail Music Award for Best Serious Composition and a Bronze Award in the Xinyi Cup competition for Chinese orchestra works by young composers, jointly presented by the Art Department of the Ministry of Culture of China and the China Nationalities Orchestra Society. Some of his works have been recorded by PARMA Recordings (USA), Hugo Productions (Hong Kong) Limited, Modern Audio Limited, among others. With an oeuvre of over one hundred works for Chinese instruments, alongside compositions in a variety of other genres, his notable works include *Dream of the Red Chamber Capriccio*, a collaboration with cellist Trey Lee and the Detroit Symphony Orchestra under the baton of Leonard Slatkin. In addition to composing, Alfred has been invited to conduct orchestras, wind bands, and ensembles in Australia, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Guangzhou, and Malaysia.

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