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## What's on at the HKGNA Music Festival 2024? Cantopop, K-pop, classical music and more

Hong Kong Generation Next Arts is bringing big names from various genres together for a series of concerts, hoping to inspire young people

**Erika Na**

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Violinist James Ehnes will perform in the opening recital for the Hong Kong Generation Next Arts music festival, which is bringing big names from various genres together for a series of concerts. Photo: courtesy of Hong Kong Generation Next Arts

Many large-scale music festivals focus on one or two genres – think the EDM- and pop-focused Ultra and Creamfields events – but this is not the case for the one hosted by Hong Kong Generation Next Arts (HKGNA).

The HKGNA Music Festival 2024 will open on November 19. This year's programme features two classical music concerts, featuring Canadian violinist James Ehnes and the Tianjin Juilliard Orchestra, as well as an evening that will see Cantopop star Hins Cheung singing with K-pop crooner Sung Si-kyung.

What sets [the NGO's annual festival](#) – which launched in 2014 and is classified as a “mega event” by the Hong Kong Tourism Board – apart from other festivals is its clear identity and mission as a charitable event that focuses on serving young people in the city, says HKGNA founder Michelle Kim.

Kim, who was born in South Korea, is an award-winning concert pianist who made her orchestral debut with the Seoul Philharmonic Orchestra when she was 10 years old.

She graduated from the prestigious Juilliard School, a performing arts conservatory in New York, and won many awards before she settled down in Hong Kong in 2007.



Pianist Michelle Kim founded Hong Kong Generation Next Arts in 2009. Photo: courtesy of Hong Kong Generation Next Arts

In 2009, she set up HKGNA and began offering free music education programmes and therapy sessions for the underprivileged – one of her former students had once been a triad member – and for mentally and physically disadvantaged young people in Hong Kong.

“We have witnessed how music can truly transform and empower our youth,” she tells the Post. “We are not a concert promoter. We dedicate ourselves to serve our Hong Kong community and our youth. We are a very small team that dreams big.”



Sung Si-kyung, one of the most popular singers in Korea, will take part in the music festival. Photo: courtesy of Hong Kong Generation Next Arts



Cantopop star Hins Cheung will perform in the music festival. Photo: courtesy of Hong Kong Generation Next Arts

This dedication to young people was what enabled HKGNA to invite big names to the city even during the Covid-19 pandemic.

“When we invited [Grammy-winning soprano] [Sumi Jo](#) to our music festival in 2022; she agreed to come to Hong Kong even though that could have meant a three-week-long [hotel] quarantine,” Kim says. In the end, the soprano did a three-day stint, as the mandatory quarantine rules changed shortly before she flew to Hong Kong.

Concerts featuring performers of such high calibre usually cost a lot to attend. To ensure accessibility, the lowest ticket prices for all four festival concerts this year is set at HK\$80 (US\$10).

This year's HKGNA music festival will start on November 19 with two concerts of classical music, the first of which is a performance of Beethoven violin sonatas by violinist James Ehnes and pianist Orion Weiss.



The Tianjin Juilliard Orchestra will make its debut in Hong Kong at the music festival. Photo: courtesy of Hong Kong Generation Next Arts

Next up, on November 24, will be the Hong Kong debut of the [Tianjin Juilliard Orchestra](#). The musicians from the Juilliard School's only overseas branch will perform under the baton of the school's Hong Kong-born director of orchestral studies, Ken Lam. The violinist Angelo Xiang Yu and violist Hanna Lee will perform as well.

The next concert, on November 29, comes with a collaboration between artists from two genres of pop music – K-pop and Cantopop. Hong Kong superstar Hins Cheung and Korean singer Sung Si-kyung will perform duets in Cantonese and Korean.

Also performing are cello soloist Leland Ko, the HKGNA Youth Orchestra and the Home of Love-Yung Shing Lion Dance Team, the last of which is made up of dancers who are mentally challenged.

Cheung makes another appearance in the final concert, on November 30, this time with the Hong Kong Children's Choir and the Hong Kong Youth Orchestra. Special guests on the night include soprano Louise Kwong and pianist Alex Wun.

For ticketing information, visit the [Hong Kong Generation Next Arts website](#).

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