

SEPTEMBER 11, 2014

VANCOUVER SYMPHONY CELEBRATES TIES TO CHINA

Chris Sivak — WE Vancouver



Guest conductor Perry So will lead the VSO in a celebration of Chinese New Year Feb. 28 — Submitted

The effectiveness with which classical music was exported to China is something that's difficult to overstate. Or perhaps, what actually neuters the hyperbole is more the enthusiasm and efficacy with which Chinese musicians took ownership of the tradition. China has become one of the world's chief exporters of top tier classical music talent.

Their top performers are greeted with rock star receptions wherever they go — at home or abroad — and ticket prices reflect a demand for — rather than an indifference to — what has often been called a dying art. It would be a self-imposed blindness if western practitioners weren't looking to Asia for lessons on how to grow and nurture their art and it's audience.

Our humble city's leading purveyor of massed violins, the Vancouver Symphony, has begun celebrating these accomplishments every year with its Pacific Rim Celebration. It's a natural fit for the organization given the city's location and reputation as a cultural melting pot. Indeed, it would probably be a short sighted omission if it didn't exist.

Says Caroline Markos, public relations associate for VSO, "Nowadays it would be a little bit odd. With our incredibly high population that celebrate the Chinese New Year, it's probably equally in proportion to the people that celebrate Christmas. It's another way to recognize the city that we live in. It's a very natural thing to include".

Returning to Vancouver is Chinese conductor, Perry So. Last March, So came to the rescue after Finnish conductor John Storgards was deemed too ill to perform. With little time to prepare, So led the VSO through a very thick program of Chopin, Sibelius, and a new work by Vancouver composer Dorothy Chang. The concert also featured one of Canada's own stars of the ivory, Louis Lortie.

Needless to say, it went very well and the organization was extremely grateful that he was able to step in.

“When a young conductor makes a good impression at the last minute they’re often invited back.” says Markos. “I think he did an amazing job for having such little preparation and there were a lot of people here who were curious what he would do if he had more time to prepare.”

Music is often described as a language – which suggests that it’s something that should be available to anyone.

“It doesn’t matter where you’re from but you can pick up an instrument and learn to play. And it’s just going to be another tool, another language to help say what you want to say and that goes for anybody anywhere in the world”.

VSO 2014/15 season highlights

Inon Barnatan • Sept. 27, 29

This rising star opens the season with the colossal Brahms Piano Concerto No. 1.

Classical Mystery Tour • Oct. 8

The world’s top Beatles tribute band.

Pacific Rim Celebration • Feb. 28

See story.

Lang Lang • Mar. 18

One of the world’s greatest pianists performs Mozart’s most beguiling piano concerto.

Spring Festival • Apr. 10-18

Devoted to Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart.

Yo-Yo Ma • May 1

The charismatic cellist makes his first Vancouver appearance in over a decade.

For the complete list of VSO concerts, head to [□ VancouverSymphony.ca](http://VancouverSymphony.ca).

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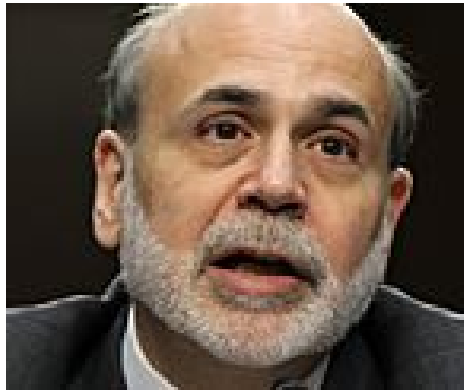


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