

Nature as Stage: Countryside Harvest Festival 2026 Transforms Lai Chi Wo into an Open-Air Cultural Landmark

Tan Dun led an open-air opera and dance festival at Lai Chi Wo on 1 March, blending global artistry, rural heritage and nature in Hong Kong's countryside.

HONG KONG, HONG KONG, March 4, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The historic Hakka village of Lai Chi Wo was transformed into an open-air performance venue on 1 March as the Countryside Conservation Office (CCO) presented the Countryside Harvest Festival 2026: "Hong Kong Soundscape – Opera & Dance" One-Day Music Festival at Yan Chau Tong, Mirs Bay.

Directed and conducted by internationally renowned composer Tan Dun — UNESCO Global Goodwill Ambassador and Hong Kong's Ambassador for Cultural Promotion — the festival brought together musicians and dancers from Hong Kong, Mainland China and overseas, including the New York Percussion Ensemble and the Hong Kong-Shenzhen-Macao Trio.

Framed by mountains and sea, the programme explored the relationship between sound, movement and landscape. The opening work, *The Rite of Spring – Samsara*, placed Stravinsky alongside Tan Dun's *Nine-Colored Deer* and *Heart Sutra*, highlighting dialogue between Western modernism and Eastern spirituality.



A second segment, “Hakka Whispers & Hong Kong Tea,” featured traditional wind instrumentalists Liu Wenwen and Zhang Meng performing in exchange with 100-year-old villager Wong Keung Ying, connecting contemporary performance with living rural heritage.

The finale, “Martial Arts Romance – Hollow Tree,” revisited Tan Dun’s film compositions, including music from Hero and Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon, recontextualised within the natural setting.



Part of the 54th Hong Kong Arts Festival’s “Festival PLUS” series, the event formed part of broader efforts to integrate cultural programming with countryside conservation, highlighting rural Hong Kong as a space for artistic production as well as heritage preservation.

Hong Kong’s Secretary for Environment and Ecology, Tse Chin-wan, noted parallel efforts to revitalise remote villages through streamlined licensing measures and infrastructure improvements, including eco-facilities and trail enhancements, supporting sustainable cultural tourism.

For Tan Dun, the festival carried a generational message. He said it represents both an artistic and a social imperative.

By allowing sound, movement and environment to co-author the experience, the Countryside Harvest Festival 2026 offered more than a one-day programme. It proposed an alternative cultural model — one in which artistic excellence, ecological awareness and ancestral memory resonate within the same horizon.

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