

# TRANSCEND

## Hong Kong New Generation Musicians Development Platform

Artistic Director: Calvin Wong Tai Shing

Production Director: Echo Liu Jia

Presented in collaboration with Casalmaggiore International Music Festival 2025

**TRANSCEND** is dedicated to nurturing a new generation of professional musicians through international collaboration, cultural exchange, and performance opportunities. Founded by cellist Calvin Wong Tai Shing, the initiative is supported by the Hong Kong SAR Government Economic and Trade Offices in Brussels, Shanghai, and Chengdu, promoting cultural exchange and concert activities across 15 countries in the European Union and over 12 provinces and cities in Mainland China, fostering dialogue between young artists, institutions, and audiences worldwide.

In alignment with Hong Kong's vision to become an "East-meets-West Centre for International Cultural Exchange", **TRANSCEND** aims to amplify the voices of emerging Chinese artists and showcase the energy, talent, and cultural vision of a new generation of musicians.

In 2025, **TRANSCEND** will present a series of performances, workshops, and educational events with the Casalmaggiore International Music Festival. These include a headline concert at the Cremona Auditorium Giovanni Arvedi, featuring Hong Kong musicians, the Mainzer Virtuosi, and **TRANSCEND**'s special guest Martin Menking of the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra 12 cellists, with the support of the HKSAR.

This year also marks the debut of **TRANSCEND**'s young student artist group from China, who will participate in festival activities, exclusive events and workshops designed to promote cross-cultural learning and artistic development.

**TRANSCEND** Special guests

## Martin Menking

### Public Masterclasses & One-on-One Lessons

(Open for application to all students)

Martin Menking is a distinguished German cellist and a long-standing member of the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra since 1996. Born in Münster in 1967, he began playing the cello at the age of nine. He studied under renowned cellists Heinrich Schiff and David Geringas, and further honed his skills in masterclasses with luminaries such as Boris Pergamenschikow, Janos Starker, Siegfried Palm, Isaac Stern, the Beaux Arts Trio, and the Alban Berg Quartet .

Prior to joining the Berlin Philharmonic, Menking served as the assistant principal cellist of the North German Radio (NDR) Symphony Orchestra in Hamburg.

Classes below are open for application to all students of the festival:

- Individual one-on-one cello lessons
- Public masterclasses

## Sandra Menking

### Body & Breath Awareness for Musicians

(Open for application to all students)

Sandra Menking is a certified osteopath, and an experienced physical coach specializing in bodywork for musicians for decades. She has completed classical ballet training at the former Ballet School of the Deutsche Oper Berlin, followed by 15 years of work as a spinal therapist in a renowned neurosurgical practice in Berlin. She has led training sessions at international institutions including Villars Music Academy (Switzerland), YMCG (China) and focusing on posture, breath, and movement awareness for performing artists.

Her group classes at Casalmaggiore will help musicians:

- Improve posture and body alignment

- Develop effective breathing techniques
- Increase mobility and coordination
- Reduce tension and risk of injury during performance
- Daily exercise program to avoid any future injuries, and to increase cognitive performance

Registration:

Students interested in any of the above classes may apply by sending an email to Backstage Studio at:  
backstagehksuzhou@outlook.com

Please include the following in your application:

A short biography (in English)

A recent performance video (YouTube link or similar)

The class(es) you are applying for:

Martin Menking – Private Lesson / Masterclass

Sandra Menking – Group Physical Posture and Breathing Class

The piece(s) you wish to work on (for Martin Menking's classes)

Deadline for applications: June 15, 2025

Selected participants will be notified by email. Availability is limited.

Fees:

The following fees apply for participation in the classes:

- Martin Menking
  - Private Cello Lesson (45–60 minutes): €200
  - Public Masterclass (active participants): €100
  
- Sandra Menking
  - Group Physical Posture and Breathing Class
  - A package of 3 sessions: €50

Fees are to be paid on-site at the festival office upon confirmation of acceptance.