



French pianist Richard Clayderman stages a concert in Guizhou province. His melodies have been broadcast in China since the mid-1980s. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Top French 'romantic' pianist adored in China

Performer Richard Clayderman a hit across age ranges

His name may not be immediately recognizable, but his music certainly is: best-selling French pianist Richard Clayderman's tunes are ubiquitous in public spaces, particularly in China where for decades, his blond hair and blue eyes have earned him the title "Prince Charming".

Although his celebrity status has faded in the West, he remains adored in the Asian nation, where he has played for 25 years.

"No one is a prophet in his own country," Clayderman told Agence France-Presse ahead of his Christmas Day performance at Beijing's Great Hall of the People, located on the edge of Tiananmen Square.

The 63-year-old pianist is

known worldwide for his 1976 *Ballad for Adeline*.

In his more than 40-year career, Clayderman said he has sold 60 million records internationally, making him one of the best-selling French musicians in history, alongside Mireille Mathieu, Jean-Michel Jarre and the late Johnny Halliday.

According to Clayderman's website, he has 70 platinum discs to his credit.

At the height of his celebrity, he was a television regular. In 1985, former United States first lady Nancy Reagan crowned him the "Prince of Romance".

He had more modest success in his motherland.

"At the end of the 1980s, I neglected France a little to meet many requests I received from Japan, Southeast Asia and Latin America," Clayderman said.

"Now, French people between 20 and 40 years old don't know me, even if I

"His music arrived at the perfect moment," music critic Hao Fang told AFP. "People in China were coming out of a period where they heard only revolutionary songs — they were thirsty for lighter melodies."

For the Chinese at the time, the piano was synonymous with European classical music, viewed as a more sophisticated genre than the love songs and simpler tunes from Hong Kong and Taiwan, or the United States.

"The melodies of Richard Clayderman seemed easily understandable, beautiful and emotionally rich from the first listen," said Du Jian, Clayderman's Chinese promoter.

"His tapes could be found in practically every home."

Xiao Kang, a 30-year-old Beijing resident, said her father used to tape the pianist's music by sticking a recorder beside the radio.

"Many Chinese people grew up with his music," she said.

'Gentlemanly image'

Today, Clayderman's music can still be widely heard in China: online, in shopping malls and hotel lobbies, elevators and in ringtones. Many young pianists also continue to study his songs.

His tour in China, *The Splendor of Romanticism*, a label often associated with France, includes 31 dates, with tickets priced between 380 and 2,018 yuan (\$58 to \$307).

"In 25 years of concerts here, I have seen China grow at an incredible speed," Clayderman said.

"Uncomfortable, dirty gyms with poor acoustics have been replaced by elegant and beautiful concert halls."

Clayderman's enduring popularity is partly due to his "gentlemanly image", consistent with the Chinese perception of a Western Prince Charming, promoter Du said.

"His blond hair and blue eyes are seen as complementary to his music, and in East Asia he immediately attracted the public with this dual advantage."

Painter's work a reminder of Japanese military sex slaves

With his latest painting, *Cry of Pain in Nanjing*, French artist Christian Poirot aims to remind people of the Japanese military's sex slave victims.

Altogether, four of his works on the same subject were presented on Nanjing Massacre Commemoration Day, which falls on Dec 13.

"I created this painting to draw the attention of the international community to the actions of certain countries that try by all means possible to erase the somber pages of their history. The work of remembrance on the subject of 'comfort women' has only just begun," Poirot said during a recent interview given at his home in Mulhouse, eastern France.

"I don't like this euphemism 'comfort women' used to designate the victims, very often underage, sometimes very young, of the mass sexual slavery system organized throughout Asia by and for the imperial Japanese army and navy, in particular during World War II," the artist said.

The exact number of victims is still difficult to evaluate



I was plunged into a storm of emotions, from disgust to hate, rage, shame as well ..."

Christian Poirot, French artist

due to the absence of precise records, but it is known that several hundred thousand women from Asia, of whom a great number were Chinese, were forced to become comfort women during the war.

In June 2017, thanks to his friend, the curator of the Memorial Hall for the Victims of the Nanjing Massacre by Japanese Invaders, Poirot could paint in the museum dedicated to comfort women, which was created on the same site as a Japanese brothel.

"I immersed myself in this

place which runs chills down your spine, where we have the impression that the walls weep, as if the tears of the women which were trapped there are still falling, where I was assailed by violent emotions," he said.

"This painting, due to its tragic subject, was difficult to complete," the artist confessed. "I was plunged into a storm of emotions, from disgust to hate, rage, shame as well ... faced with this crime against humanity," he said, while presenting the painting during the interview.

The painting comprises three sections, which tell the different scenes of the history of comfort women.

For the 70th anniversary of the end of World War II, Poirot made a poignant and massive painting on the Nanjing Massacre called *Deliverance*, which he presented as a gift to the Memorial Hall in Nanjing.

For more than six weeks, from Dec 13, 1937 to January 1938, more than 300,000 Chinese were murdered by Japanese invaders.

XINHUA



French artist Christian Poirot donates five of his paintings on comfort women to the Nanjing Museum of the Site of Lijixiang Comfort Stations in Nanjing, Jiangsu province in December.

CUI XIAO / FOR CHINA DAILY

AFP

Advertorial

Bureau Veritas committed to expanding Chinese market

By TANG ZHIHAO

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Bureau Veritas will celebrate its 190th anniversary in 2018, with the French origin company aiming to bring its expertise to serve Chinese companies and support them in their ambitious transformation plans.

"Bureau Veritas, a global leader in testing, inspection, certification and technical consulting, will deliver high-quality services to help clients to meet the growing challenges of quality, health, safety, environmental protection and social responsibility in China," said David Wang, senior vice-president of Bureau Veritas CIF Division and regional chief executive of China.

The company, which started operating in China in 1993, has more than 120 offices and labs in 55 cities across the country. It has established a strong presence in sectors including marine and offshore activities, oil and gas, consumer products and commodities. China has grown into the company's largest market globally in terms of revenue, Wang said.

"Bureau Veritas released a five-year development plan in 2015, and China is the most important market for the group," Wang said. "We are very confident about future development in China. We are proud to say that China is also the first country for Bureau Veritas in terms of revenue and in terms of employees."

Apart from strengthening its competitiveness in traditional industries, Bureau Veritas also plans to offer an extensive portfolio of services for newly emerging industries to serve changing demands in the Chinese market.



David Wang, senior vice-president of Bureau Veritas CIF Division and regional chief executive of China.

120+

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The company has identified five key emerging sectors that it will focus on in the coming years: construction (building and infrastructure), automotive, food and agriculture, asset management and internet of things.

Serving the B&R Initiative

Bureau Veritas, which has presence in more than 140 countries, is keen to play a more significant role in serving China's Belt and Road Initiative.

"Many people have said foreign companies cannot give much support to the Belt and Road Initiative, but I think foreign companies can provide strong support," Wang said.

He said Bureau Veritas will not only help companies certify their products but also help them to export capital, technol-

ogies and even their standards. It will provide consulting services such as legal, cultural and policy support to companies.

Localization

Bureau Veritas has long been committed to promoting its localization strategy in China, aiming to better serve the local market.

Nowadays, it has more than 15,000 professional staff members in China. More than 99 percent of these are Chinese.

It has established partnerships with many local companies so it can react to clients' demands in a more effective and efficient manner and says it now has a leading position in the construction service market.

Over the past 25 years, Bureau Veritas has provided services to more than 20,000 domestic and foreign companies in China, covering sectors such as power supply, metros and railways, retail and industrial equipment and facilities.

Apart from helping Chinese companies to look for opportunities in foreign markets, the company also helps foreign companies to enter and adapt to the Chinese market by offering them complete services along the value chain.

"In China, Bureau Veritas is a foreign-based Chinese-featured company," Wang said. It provides customized services to help save time and better support clients' project development.

Wang said Bureau Veritas is committed to becoming a bridge to help foreign companies to invest in China and Chinese enterprises to go global, and reduce their risks in quality, safety, the environment and social responsibility.

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We ensure your products, assets and services are well-designed, efficient and safe.



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